APRIL 1963

Commentary

CHURCH, STATE & THE JEWS

Arthur Hertzberg

THE TAX TRIMMERS: Robert Lekachman

EDWARD ALBEE: Alfred Chester

REILLY AND I: Boris Weiss

SCIENTISTS IN THE CLASSROOM: Martin Mayer

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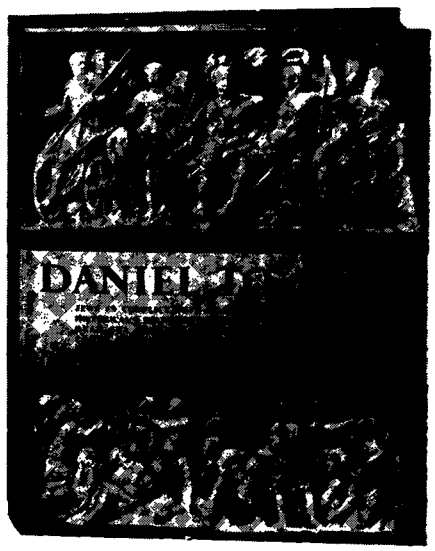

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CONTENTS OF
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Commentary

APRIL 1963
NUMBER 4
VOLUME 35

Church, State, and the Jews	277	ARTHUR HERTZBERG
The Tax Trimmers	289	ROBERT LEKACHMAN
Edward Albee: Red Herrings & White Whales	296	ALFRED CHESTER
Reilly and I	302	BORIS WEISS
Scientists in the Classroom	312	MARTIN MAYER
A Story In Acknowledgment of a Chief Rabbi	320	DEIRDRE LEVINSON
India's Crisis: A Diary	326	JOHN MANDER
Responses and Reactions III	335	NORMAN MAILER
Letters from Readers	338	
Books in Review		
Against the American Grain, by Dwight Macdonald	351	STEVEN MARCUS
The Natural and the Supernatural Jew, by Arthur A. Cohen	353	MARVIN FOX
Main Currents in Modern Economics, by Ben B. Seligman	356	C. E. AYRES
Here to Stay: Studies in Human Tenacity, by John Hersey	360	RENATA ADLER
Some Recent Jewish Books	364	MILTON HIMMELFARB

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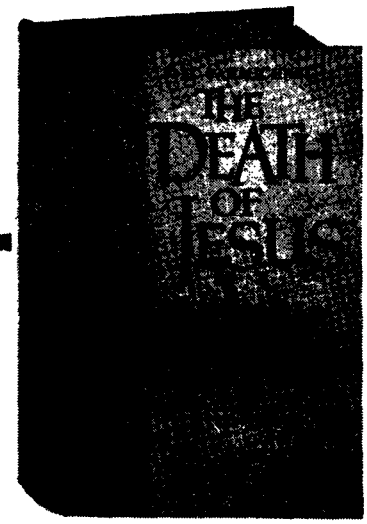

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CHURCH, STATE, AND THE JEWS

ARTHUR HERTZBERG

"THE TIME has come," editorialized the Jesuit magazine *America* in the wake of the Supreme Court decision in the Regents' Prayer case, "for [Jews] to decide among themselves precisely what they conceive to be the final objective of the Jewish community in the United States—in a word, what bargain they are willing to strike as one of the minorities in a pluralistic society." Many Jews were offended by the question, and indeed the rhetoric of the editorial was in some ways offensive, but the question is nevertheless a fair one and deserves an honest answer.

The answer, however, must at once be both simple and complicated. Complicated, because in order to find the true meaning of the Jewish position on church-state issues, it must be understood at the outset that words like "religion," "secularism," "society," have resonances in Christian tradition and post-Christian secularism that they do not have for Jews. Before the challenge from *America* can be taken up, then, it is necessary to recognize that Jews—even Jews alienated from their own religious and historic traditions—differ from Christians not only in the conclusions they draw from society but in the premises they hold about it. We can, though, begin by stating simply that while there are of course deep differences of outlook within the Jewish community, the overwhelming weight of both feeling and opinion among contemporary Jews is for the strictest kind of separation between religion and the state —and even between religion and society. Nor is this opinion merely a tactical response to the current situation in America; it is in fact the expression of an attitude to society that has deep roots in Jewish history, especially in the Western experience of the last eighteen centuries.

But for Christians, too, there is the matter of the bargain *they* have struck to attain the freedom that American society offers them—a matter which has tended to get obscured in the controversy now raging about the meaning and intention of the First Amendment. For the controversy has up to now largely centered on the question of how much, if any, support the government of the United States may extend to religious groups as such, or to religion in general. Yet the equally important question of what American society requires of religion in exchange for the freedom it offers has remained relatively unexamined.

Stated too simply, the notion of freedom of religion can be misleading. For crucial to the particular kind of free society created in this country is the implicit demand it has always made on religion. What the First Amendment grew out of and sub-

ARTHUR HERTZBERG, a frequent contributor, is rabbi of Temple Emanu-el in Englewood, New Jersey, and lecturer in history at Columbia University. Material from the present article will form part of his contribution to *The Outbursts That Await Us: Three Essays on Religion and Culture*, soon to be published by Macmillan.

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sequently determined was less the notion of strict religious "freedom" than the idea of a "compact" to be struck between society as a whole and the religious groups comprehended within it. Society undertook not to coerce any of the various religious sects through the power of the state, guaranteeing the "free exercise" of all spiritual faiths—and on the other side, the sects were to pay for this freedom by giving up their right to coerce society.

On this point the lesson of American history is as clear as a human record can be. It was decided long ago by the Supreme Court, for instance, that a Mormon may not practice polygamy, despite the serious religious conviction that commands him to do so. Nor is a man, merely by proving that he objects to bearing arms on religious grounds, thereby exempted as a matter of undeniable right from the military draft; such exemptions are granted by individual acts of legislative grace.

NOT ONLY in this kind of detail, however, nor only in relation to unpopular minority sects, does American society assert its right to effect the modification of religious practice; by extension this right is carried into the domain of doctrine itself. For while each religious group in America may continue to view itself as the absolute vessel of God's true revelation of Himself—dealing absolutely with those who freely elect to accept its discipline—and while each is scrupulously protected with respect to the requirements necessary to the exercise of persuasion on the broadest scale, they must all renounce their claim on the souls of those who reject their doctrine. It is unthinkable, for example, that in America the Roman Catholic Church should sue to enjoin a baptized Catholic from remarrying after a civil divorce. In sum, American society has always asked, and continues to ask, of religious groups something previously unknown and almost unimaginable: that each of them, remaining for itself and in private the only true and revealed faith, behave "publicly" as if its truth were as tentative as an aesthetic opinion or a scientific theory.

Now, the concept of the limited state on which the American Constitution is based is not a new one in Western history. Medieval political theory declares the state to be subordinate to natural law and to the authority of the church. In the name of this idea a pope once made an emperor kneel in penitence in the snows of Canossa. Of course, the limits set for a medieval monarch by the authority incarnate in the church militant were different from those that were defined by a sovereign people for its new American state; nevertheless the act of limiting the power of the state did have precedents in the political tradition. What was really new—and unique—in the American experiment was the concept of the limited church.

This concept was a construction of history, not of theology. To be sure, it was foreshadowed in the theories of Roger Williams, but it was not through these theories that the idea came to triumph. A recent document produced for the United Presbyterian Church, called *Relations Between Church and State,* states the case most aptly:

> Although colonial and subsequent Presbyterians played active and dramatic roles in the evolution of the concept of church-state separation, it is a mistake to assume that this concept has grown out of any doctrine of Christian theology. Separation of church and state in the United States was not a product of theological reflection alone. In a real sense it was a decisively secular development and obtained most of its meaning from the national experience of the United States of America.

Left to themselves, the major faiths of the Western world have not thought about each other very much, except as potential objects for conversion. The American stance on freedom of religion is based on the implicit announcement to each of the various religious groups that the others

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are here to stay. What name one may wish to give to this announcement is irrelevant. But that it has shaped the religions in America, and in a more positive way than by simply providing them with empty space in which to expand and collide, seems undeniable. So, for example, in the bitter debate about the Catholic faith which marked the political campaign of 1960, when Catholics in America were charged with everything that had ever happened in the Middle Ages or was happening in places like contemporary Spain, they answered in essence that America is different and the Catholics have themselves become different by assenting to the American experiment and by living loyally within it. And this is true. It is inconceivable today in America that Roman Catholic priests should be involved in the leadership of an anti-Semitic movement—precisely what is happening in Argentina, where the hierarchy has failed to silence priests who are spokesmen for the racist Tacuara organization.

At least to someone looking from the outside, it seems that the 1960 election had certain crucial consequences for Catholics and for America above and beyond the election of a Catholic to the Presidency. In the height of the campaign several important statements were made on behalf of the American hierarchy; they amounted to a formal promise to abide by the self-limiting tradition of the sects in America —i.e., to behave in actual practice as one among many churches. It was thus that the Catholics purchased the inevitable ticket of full admission into American society.

THIS sundering of private faith from public policy is, for good historical reasons, extremely congenial to Jews, for they have experienced public policy over the centuries as a force inimical both to the practice of their religion and the safety of their lives.

Historians have generally emphasized that the Jewish community prior to its political emancipation (which is nowhere more than two centuries old) was dominated by its own "established" faith. To be sure, the ghetto community was monolithic and highly disciplined, but its authority could only operate on people who chose anew each day to resist apostasy. In the eyes of those who wielded the real political power, for a Jew to leave Judaism and become a Christian was considered a virtue; the only kind of apostasy that was ever a crime against the state in Europe was defection from the dominant Christian faith. The Jew who defected was thereby relieved of the burden of persecution and often treated with special consideration. Consequently, the Jews were not merely under persistent pressure and temptation throughout the Middle Ages to convert from their faith; they were the sole community in the Christian West in such a situation. What greater proof than this very fact did the Jews need in order to believe that religion could be sustained without support from the power of the state?

The predominant Jewish experience of the state in medieval Europe was one of cowering before its enmity. A Jew could only hope, in the words of the oft-repeated prayer, that "the hearts of kings and princes be turned with favor toward Thy people Israel." Furthermore, the state was usually either neutral or faintly well disposed toward Jews in a directly inverse ratio to the influence over its rulers by prelates. There were occasions in European history when the Church protected Jews from rapacious princes, but these occasions were exceptional. The establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire by Constantine, immediately accompanied by persecution of the Jews in the name of the true faith, seemed to fix the norm for the rest of Christian history.

The experience of all those centuries does, however, bring up two points that are relevant to the question of present-day America. Jews have come to know, almost by instinct, that their freedom is safest—

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indeed that their freedom can only be achieved—in societies where the dominance of the church in public life has been blunted. Research into modern Jewish history provides convincing evidence that an early impetus toward the ultimate emancipation of the Jews came from the 17th- and 18th-century mercantilist powers, who were no longer thinking of the state as Christian and who therefore tended to be hospitable to any people who brought realistic advantage to the country. In the second place, Jewish experience with inimical rulers can be summarized in what the greatest of contemporary Jewish historians, Salo Baron, has called virtually a "law": the Jews and Judaism are better off, and feel safer, in a pluralist society made up of a number of national groups and/or religious sects than they are in a unitary political or religious structure. Thus another seed of political freedom for Jews can be found in the agreement in the 17th century to end the wars of religion and to accept religious diversity as the norm of Western Christendom. The multi-national and multi-religious Austro-Hungarian Empire was a far happier place for Jews than a monolithic Germany proved to be.

THE RISE of the modern secular state, then, was the *sine qua non* for Jewish emancipation. For Christianity, however, this same historical development has meant a position of lesser power in men's affairs. The power of Protestantism has been affected as well as the power of Catholicism, but for various reasons, the Catholic Church has responded with more direct animus against the forces it has held to be responsible for the declining influence of religion. The *Syllabus of Errors,* promulgated by Pius IX in 1864, in which the "liberal revolution" and all its implications were condemned, was such a response. Pius IX's censures of the separation of church and state, religious liberty, and public education no longer constitute Catholic doctrine, certainly not in America. It is one thing, however, to make a necessary accommodation to the secular state; and it is quite another to hail it—as Jews have done—as your liberator from age-old oppressions.

In this—which points to nothing less than the different meanings of anti-Semitism for Jewish and for Western history—we have arrived at the heart of the matter. The mainstream of Western thought, both Christian and post-Christian, affirms that the history of the West has been on the whole a good human record marred by many imperfections, among them hatred of the Jew. Therefore, except for the initiators of radical revolutionary movements, few people doubt that Western tradition need only be carried along further in the direction in which it has always been going, with some necessary reforms to broaden and purify its culture. And the eradication of anti-Semitism is generally included among the reforms to be achieved in an ever progressive West.

Many Jews share with the gentiles this view of their civilization—at least intellectually they do—and they also share in the common belief that reform will suffice to put the Jews at last out of danger. But in that place where the heart stores its forebodings, most Jews do not believe it at all. European history has boasted too many pogroms, auto-da-fés, and death camps for Jews to believe, with Olympian calm, that these phenomena are an unfortunate but accidental feature of European civilization. The Jews must diagnose the Western tradition as not merely prone to the virus of anti-Semitism but chronically, or endemically, ill with it. For their own safety and for the future lives of their children, Jews must look to a radical change in the very foundations of Western civilization.

This special Jewish need has been little understood; in the light of it, we find that the two main streams of Jewish modernism —Zionism, which has generally been considered a radical solution to the Jewish problem, and assimilationism, which has appeared to offer the solution of gradualist

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accommodation to Western culture—exactly reverse their positions. Zionism is in fact the conservative position, basing itself on two propositions: one, that all basic identities are, or ought to be, national; and two, that anti-Semitism is a hideously aggravated but essentially rational response to a national imbalance that can quite simply be rectified. Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, asserted that it was the "abnormality" of the Jews' being everywhere a national minority that had brought what were otherwise normal tensions between national groups to the pitch of traditional European anti-Semitism; if the Jew therefore reorganized his identity into the recognized form, all abnormal hatreds would automatically disappear. Zionists, moreover, in their profound understanding of the fact that culture is more than political identity, have been willing to admit that in some fundamental sense Western culture will remain pervasively Christian. There can and ought to be, then—for the sake of everybody's peace and dignity—a comparable Jewish national culture. Such a culture could even be (indeed in Israel it largely is) post-Jewish, but it would at least be as related to its own religious history as contemporary post-Christianity is related to the historic values and experiences of the church.

The Zionist conception of the relation of religion to culture was recently given an important expression in the decision of the Israel Supreme Court in the case of Brother Daniel. A Catholic monk of Jewish birth, Brother Daniel had been admitted to Israel and was, under its law, free to ask for naturalization as a citizen of the state. He sued instead for automatic admission under the Law of Return, the state's provision that any Jew, of any provenance, can automatically demand citizenship in Israel. Brother Daniel demanded to be described as a Jew by nationality and a Catholic by faith. One minority view in the Supreme Court of Israel supported this demand, in the name of the absolute separation of religion and national identity. The majority opinion was delivered by Chief Justice Silberg:

> I have not come to preach religiosity and I do not represent any particular view as to a proper future development of the Jewish people . . . but one thing is held in common by all parts of the people which dwells in Zion (except for a minuscule minority), and it is this: We are not cutting ourselves off from the historic past, and we are not denying our ancestral heritage. . . . Only a fool would believe or think that we are here creating a new culture, for—it is much too late! A people which is almost as old as mankind itself does not start *ab ovo*. . . .

The Brother Daniel decision has implications beyond the borders of Israel. Brother Daniel's rights to every consideration for his faith will be guarded zealously, but within a society which is overwhelmingly and publicly Jewish. Just so, one could say that Jews must be politically indistinguishable from all other citizens in America, but that the religio-cultural issues must work themselves out separately. Here, as in Israel, the state is neutral, but here the majority culture is Christian. Jews must accept the fact that they are a cultural minority and that properly temperate expressions of the majority outlook in our public institutions (e.g., Christmas celebrations in the public schools that are not offensively Christological) are as acceptable as are Purim carnivals in the schools of Tel Aviv. What, in the contemporary translation of the Zionist outlook, the Jews have a right to ask is that they be treated with every consideration a majority can offer the sensibilities and sensitivities of a minority.

HOWEVER, the real thrust of Jewish modernity, beginning with the political emancipation of the Jews in Europe, has been in another direction—has, in fact, been tied to the dream of a basic transformation. Its most extreme form, that of belief in total assimilation, is not, as so many Jewish ideologists have

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claimed, the one most accommodating to gentile culture, but the most radical in its demands on that culture. The source of this dream in Jewish tradition and consciousness is, of course, the vision of the Messianic age, of "a new heaven and a new earth," when all the old order of the world would be overturned completely and Jewish suffering would be brought to an end. The expansive spirits at the dawn of Jewish modernity immediately saw in the beginnings of political emancipation a wholly new possibility for achieving the Messianic age—in this world and by human agency. Had not the advanced minds of the Enlightment envisaged a world in which all "medievalism"—i.e., all artificially imposed differences among men—would disappear in the name of the oneness of humanity? Was not Progress the new deity for their age?

It was inevitable that, more than any other single community, the Jews should have greeted the radical change promised by the Enlightenment: they longed to be not merely fully protected citizens but brothers to their fellow Europeans. Hence the now-famous passion of so many Jews for all the new 18th- and 19th-century ideologies, from the Rights of Man to Marxism to the Freudian unconscious. The generous promise of modern movements, liberal and socialist, was a world in which there would be neither Jew nor Christian. The movements were embraced not only by Jews who wished to give up Judaism and worship at the new altars of man; many fervently religious Jews also became partisans of various secularist political movements because they held out the hope of an end to anti-Semitism.

That hope was not to be realized in Europe, cradle of Western civilization. One need not even go so far as to mention Nazism and Communism. The liberal anti-clerical Third French Republic, for instance, after the Church was totally disestablished, could not produce a situation of real cultural equality. Public school classes to this day are held on Saturday in France and could never be held on Sunday; so it is possible to raise one's children to be Christian, but impossible to raise them as Jews, without coming into collision with the practices of state institutions. By now, then, the first flush of Jewish fervor for modern secular ideologies has been tempered or rendered timid: anti-Semitism in Europe has certainly not been obliterated, and in some cases secularism has lent it an even greater virulence.

All this makes the encounter of the Jew with America uniquely important. The enormous attraction that this country has always held for European Jews —both those who came to it and those who could not do so—did not merely lie in its open frontiers and economic opportunities. In America was located the one society in the Western world which had had no medieval past: no ghetto, no pogroms, no anti-Jewish state. Here the Jew might share as an equal in the creation of that modern dream, the "new man." Here was the last, best hope of the Jew to become a normal part of a national culture. It is interesting to note that the Jews were the only ethnic group in America which in the years of the great depression still showed a surplus of immigrants over emigrants. After their untold wanderings, America for its Jews has become not another way station but the end of the line.

Most American Jews thus have an investment in this country that commits them to something far beyond being a benevolently treated minority in a Christain culture presided over by a neutral state. A generation ago this commitment was expressed in the idea of "cultural pluralism," according to which every American was to live in two cultures, the public culture common to all and the subculture of his own particular ethnic tradition. Of course, cultural pluralism proved to be a chimera because all the other ethnic groups chose to become totally ac-

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culturated. The grandchildren of the non-Jewish immigrants—as Will Herberg famously pointed out in his book *Catholic-Protestant-Jew*—have maintained only one distinctive characteristic: the religion (but not the ethnic consciousness) of their ancestors. Though Herberg himself was careful to say that religion has, and must have, cultural and social implications, his analysis has been assimilated into the public mind as a blueprint for a secular public culture shared by all Americans, who will differ from one another only in being members of three distinct enclaves of private religious faith. The image is best projected nowadays at Presidential Inaugurations, where clergymen of all three major divisions of faith offer prayer. For Jews the participation of rabbis in the Inaugural ceremonies is undoubtedly far more impressive than is the participation of bishops to Christians. The matter-of-course appearance of a rabbi at the most sacral moment of American civic life is visible proof indeed that they are full co-owners of American culture.

The instance of prayers at the Inauguration serves to illustrate a further point: namely, it is simply not true that Jews are completely and consistently fixed in their strict interpretation of the First Amendment. Such things as chaplains in the armed services, prayers at state occasions, tax exemptions for religious institutions—while the most doctrinaire member of the Supreme Court, Justice Douglas, would now like to strike them down in the name of intellectual and legal consistency—are no more troublesome to Jewish than to Christian opinion. For these practices extend to the Jews in every respect exactly as to all other denominations in America; no pressure of the majority or of its faith is being exercised upon them. Jews speak of the separation of church and state in absolute terms only on those occasions when they are asked to submit to practices which force them to admit to themselves that their status in America is no more than that of a generously tolerated minority. The First Amendment is not the real dogma of the American Jew. His deepest and most messianic need is not a completely secular state; it is a truly equal status in American culture.

THE true meaning of the battle currently raging over the First Amendment, then, is not that it is a confrontation between Christian defenders of the religio-cultural status quo and Jews in a somewhat uncomfortable league with the secularists to alter it. In fact, Jewish pressure on the status quo has far less significance than Catholic pressure to create a change in the balance between religion and the public culture. For one brief moment in history, on the day that John F. Kennedy was barely elected to the White House, Jewish and Catholic feeling and interests coincided. And Jews gave a politician for whom, in his own person, they were certainly far less enthusiastic than they had been for Roosevelt, the largest majority of their votes in history. So, naturally, did Catholics. Since that day, however, Catholics have not merely redoubled their efforts to get tax aid for parochial schools, they have largely replaced Protestants in the van of defending religion in the public schools. These are the very public schools that Catholics once abandoned as being too "godless" at a time when Christianity (i.e., Protestantism) was being much more overtly practiced in them than it is today. Indeed, Catholics have largely replaced Protestants as the guardians of that whole complex of practices once created to serve a sub-Protestant public piety. However one may characterize Jewish policy, it is now clearly in conflict with the new Catholic drive for a more Christian America.

And what of the Protestants in all this? Of course, there is no such thing as one Protestantism in America; that which we call Protestantism is a composite of several often conflicting traditions. In the South, for instance, fundamentalism is virtually a state church. For fundamenta-

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lists, devotion to the First Amendment expresses itself, as during the 1960 election, in the form of a simple anti-Catholic nativism. Fundamentalists are against any kind of aid to parochial schools on grounds of separation of church and state, but they are equally violent about any attempt to remove Christian practices from the schools.

At the other extreme of theological sophistication are many Protestant leaders who support the absolute separation of church and state for very positive religious reasons. Men like Franklin Littell are eager to keep Protestantism entirely free of any hampering relationship to American culture, and especially to American patriotism, so that the church may unambiguously become what it ought to be, the critic and the conscience of society. The document of the United Presbyterian Church cited above suggests to Presbyterians the following position: "Theologically, the church must be aware that the sole constant in its mandate is the fact of Jesus Christ. It is to the Christ that the church bears witness, not to a theological articulation of the place of the political order in the structure of reality." Therefore, in such a practical matter as tax exemption for religious agencies, "the church must regard special status or favored position as a hindrance to the fulfilling of its mission."

But the main impulse of American Protestantism lies somewhere in between. The "stated clerk" of the very denomination for whom the above study document was prepared, Eugene Carson Blake, spoke rather differently in the summer of 1960, when he was afraid that a Roman Catholic might wind up in the White House. The grounds for his fear, he said, were that "a Protestant President is free to participate in the many interfaith activities that have been built up so carefully over the years. But a Roman Catholic is not." Obviously, even in the heat of that turbulent summer, Dr. Blake knew very well that attending interfaith activities is not a constitutional duty of the President. What he really feared was an impairment of the image of our culture in which the various sects are treated as equals, and religion as a whole is in some deep sense the American Establishment. And it was in the same spirit that Bishop James Pike deplored the decision in the Regents' Prayer case.

But perhaps the most significant reactions to the Regents' Prayer decision came from Reinhold Niebuhr and John C. Bennett, who, as leaders of liberal opinion among Protestants on interreligious and social issues, took many people by surprise with their opposition to the Supreme Court's strict separationist stand. Niebuhr held that "the prayer seemed to be a model of accommodation to the pluralistic nature of our society" and deplored the possibility of a "consistently secular education that the Founding Fathers certainly did not intend."

There are two things implied in a position like Niebuhr's: one, that religion in America is quasi-established, and two, that the terms of that establishment include only such rituals and restrictions as keep the three main historic faiths equal. From such a point of view one can imagine a public policy that would include teaching about religion in the schools as a fact of culture; experimenting with "shared time"; inclusion of Bible reading in the school programs, but elimination of sectarian practices like Christmas celebrations and the Lord's Prayer; observance of some blue laws, with legal exemptions for Jewish Sabbath observers; agitation to remove such laws as those on the books of Massachusetts and Connecticut pertaining to birth control; but a growing concern, in the name of fairness, for the special Catholic burden of supporting an expanding parochial school system.

As for the Jews, the policy outlined above—though unsatisfying to their particular interests in many details—is never-

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theless in essence a fair representation of their own wishes for American society. It grants their cherished desire for a tri-faith image of America. And further, it assumes the existence of a genuine religious consensus based, not on some lowest common denominator Christianity, but on the biblical values common to both Judaism and Christianity. Thus Jews and Protestants are actually approaching one another more closely on the questions of church-state relations—in proportion to the growing Protestant acceptance of the mutually self-denying bargain that religious denominations have struck with American society in exchange for their freedom.

CATHOLIC commitment to such a self-limiting pledge is of course far more problematic in the very nature of Catholicism. But even in Catholic thought there is some stirring in a new direction. John Courtney Murray—theologically far too much of a Catholic classicist to entertain for a moment the notion that any other religion than his own is ultimately true—has spoken in a way indicating movement toward the other faiths:

> There may indeed be some three hundred religious bodies in America. But there are not that many "styles" of religious belief. In fact, there are generically only three—the Protestant, the Catholic, and the Jewish. They are radically different "styles" and no one of them is reducible, or perhaps even comparable, to any of the others.

Official Catholic policy, however, appears to be determined by other, special, considerations. The violence of the Catholic response to the decision in *Engel v. Vitale* could clearly not have been occasioned by the excision of a short prayer of little, if any, religious significance. Behind this response lurked the grave problem for Catholics of the future financing of the parochial schools. Cardinal Spellman's statement on the decision, although his most important concern was for maintaining the Christian flavor of American culture, forthrightly linked the two issues. Such decisions as that prohibiting the Regents' Prayer, he said, tend to "the establishment of a new religion of secularism." The same attitude had been expressed a few months earlier in the Boston *Pilot,* the official paper of the diocese of Cardinal Cushing, which was even more vehement about a suggested breach in the blue laws. The Senate of Massachusetts had already passed a bill exempting all Jewish Sabbath observers, whatever their business, from the prohibition to keep open on Sunday. The editorial in the *Pilot* was willing to concede this right to establishments purveying kosher food and the like, primarily to Jews, but it called any further liberalization a "shocking assault," "unjust and offensive," and evidence that a "carefully organized minority has done its work to destroy the Sunday." The editorial then named the senators who had voted for the bill, clearly asking that pressure be brought upon them. (It was, and the bill was rescinded.) In the heat of that moment it was forgotten that in 1960, in the crucial last week of the Presidential election campaign, Cardinal Cushing had assured the country that the hierarchy would never dictate to voters on any issue. And examples of this kind multiply. No one even attempts to deny, for instance, that the bill for major federal aid to education has thus far been defeated by pressure brought to bear on the members of Congress from the Catholic hierarchy, who want a bill that includes parochial schools or no bill at all.

Yet it would neither be true to say that "liberal" Catholic views were merely campaign oratory nor that there is a continuing Catholic drive to "dominate" America (whatever that word may mean in this context). What then is the character of Catholic policy? It seems to me that Catholic demands can only be explained in the light of Catholic conceptions of the future of American society and of America's role in the world. Within

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America, Catholics are (and from their point of view, it must be said, rightly) fearful of "indifferentism," the sin of believing that one religion is as good as another. To be sure, such a belief does not really operate today among theologians—except possibly for Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, who approach it—but it does in a very untheoretical way pervade American consciousness. From the middle of the 19th century, when Catholics fought hard for the First Amendment, to the present, Catholic policy has really moved in a straight line; for it has always been one of keeping Catholics out of an "indifferentist" consensus. What makes the difference today is that the Roman Catholic Church is paradoxically both strong enough—in numbers and in generations of rootedness in America—and weak enough—in the overextension of its economic resources—to join in open battle for a different kind of America, an America in which it might win tax support for creating "a truly pluralist educational order."

An even larger concern of Catholic policy is Communism. Christianity as a whole has lost heavily in recent decades, and the Catholic Church more heavily than Protestantism. Naturally, the danger from Communism is most immediate to the heaviest losers. To the Catholic mind, schooled as it is to think in terms of faith and dogma, the confrontation with Communism is a war of ideas between religion and anti-religion. America, as the leader of the West, is cast for the role of the knightly defender of the faith. But for America to be true to this sacred mission, the Christian character of her public life must be buttressed. Parochial schools will teach the Catholics; and the children of others must get at least enough indoctrination in the public schools to give them an appreciation of the trust which as Americans they bear.

All the various positions in America, religious and secular, have in common their rootedness in a basic cast of the Western mind. The precision of Aristotelian logic and the beauty of Platonic ideas have made of that mind a thing enchanted with tidiness and the abstractions it brings. Life, however, is concrete and diffuse; it is very untidy and its stuff does not fit easily into definitions. The faith-counterfaith definition of the West's struggle with Communism in fact contains the seed of America's certain defeat in the world at large. For what America can uniquely offer to the peoples of Asia and Africa is not the vision of a Christian or a Judeo-Christian society but precisely of a pluralistic world order in which all men are permitted, nay encouraged, to pursue their own faiths, hopes, and aspirations.

THE taking over of the Western ideological bent of mind by so many Jews on their being emancipated into the modern world seems now to have been inevitable: not only, as we have said, because the new ideologies bespoke a new society that would transcend at once all those centuries of hatred and exclusion of the Jews. The Jew's acceptance of dogmatic Western secular "religions" was also his first instinctive gesture of acculturation to a characteristic Western mode of thought and belief. At its deepest, this is what the abandonment of the talmudic academy for the European university meant. Essentially, however, the Jew is the product of a tradition which is intellectually unideological. Only for Aristotle is A not non-A; classically the Jew can be at one and the same time a bearer of a universal religion and a particular national tradition, a member of the "chosen people" and the possessor of no special rights or qualities. His history is correspondingly unlogical. The ideological ages and societies have always attempted to do away with the Jew, in the name of order. He has flourished where the "theology" of rulers has been tempered by pragmatic common sense.

Thus today the American Jew cannot share in the prevailing Catholic con-

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cepts of America and the West. He must, however, equally resist the blandishments of "First Amendmentism." Any dogma taken to the extreme is ultimately the enemy of freedom, and, as the Jew should by now have re-learned from his experience with modern ideologies, it is his enemy. Constitutional logic by itself could not prevent, say, some future generation's opening the public schools on Saturday, for the purpose of intensifying education; in the end, only the untidiness of intergroup arrangement, compromise, and, sometimes, counterpressure will make such a thing impossible.

At the moment some Jews, along with some Protestants, are committed to their own parochial schools and therefore in agreement with Catholics on the question of federal aid. An alliance of this kind must no more be taken as a permanent one than the alliance of most of organized Jewry with secularists to support a strict interpretation of the First Amendment. For religious alliances, like political ones, are *ad hoc*. What is permanent is the continuing network of intentions and special needs of each of the faiths. So, the most parochial and Orthodox of Jews may agree with others that there is need for more religion in public life, but he will recoil when this need is fulfilled in such fashion as to add an iota to the coercive power of the Christian majority over him. Most Jewish leaders would probably have preferred not to have the Regents' Prayer question litigated before the Supreme Court when it was. If the time had really been ripe for the removal of some sectarian practices from the schools, specifically Christian ones like Christmas observances would have been of far greater concern to Jews than a non-denominational prayer. Similarly with the continuing dispute about Bible readings and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer in the classrooms. Jews can accept, and may even strongly favor Bible readings: so central to our civilization is the Bible that not to know it is to be almost uneducated.

However, the protection of the First Amendment extends not only to religious minorities all of whom have the Bible in common; it must also shelter the non-Judeo-Christians, including atheists and agnostics. In any case, the task of teaching the Bible were better left to religious institutions, since the current practice of reading a few verses without comment in the morning does exercise pressure on the children of agnostics without even beginning to teach the Bible adequately to the children of believers. Jews who are opposed to Bible reading are therefore no more strongly so, nor for any different reasons, than many other people. The Lord's Prayer, however, is another matter entirely; it is a specifically Christian prayer and its recitation in the schools is clearly a sectarian practice, to which all Jews without exception are adamantly opposed.

SO MUCH of the present church-state controversy revolves around the schools for the obvious reason that, more than any other institution, it is the schools that shape our culture. For the vast majority of Jews the public school is the object of a primary, tacit commitment; it is the first and foremost institution for their integration into America. Jews are thus perhaps the strongest defenders of public education. Arguments about whether the public school is secular or secularist (it is in truth neither) are irrelevant. American intellectual and civic tradition exerts its influence as much through the general atmosphere of the school as through specific teachings. Everyone is today committed to pluralism, but do we want a completely fragmented America? That which pulls our diversities together into a viable common society—call it Americanism or Americanness—is largely the creation of the one place where most Americans do spend a crucial part of their lives together. If parochial, or class-determined private schools were to become the norm for America, we would be going a long step toward erecting a society of

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co-existing ghettos. This is not to say that some parochial education will not, and should not, continue to exist, but it must not, in most Jewish views, become the dominant or even the equal educational form.

Discussions of religion and culture these days tend to dwell largely on the questions which separate the various religious denominations in America, and we tend to overlook how very much they have in common in the realm of social policy. No major religious group in America is racist; all are devoted to a democratic order in politics; and all their pronouncements on social justice are indistinguishable from one another. It is, then, far easier to achieve consensus in action than in thought or even in prayer. This fact goes with the very nature of the American tradition, with its tentativeness and its emphasis on the needs of the day. Perhaps the only phrase that adequately describes the complicated pattern into which American tradition, law, and religion have become interwoven is "not quite." Religion is neither established nor completely disestablished in America. There is separation of church and state, but it is not absolute. Nothing seems clearer than that there is a body of specifically American attitudes that have to some extent reshaped religious denominational life, but this body of attitudes is neither doctrinaire nor is there complete agreement about its precise nature. Jewish life in America can also be characterized as "not quite." Certainly Jews here are no longer in Exile, by any traditional definition of that term; but neither are they co-founders of American culture. In most things they are "just like everybody else"; in some, they are uniquely different.

The Founding Fathers have, in the First Amendment, given Americans not a dogma but a clue, a clue to how to live with such complications as we all now face in an undogmatic way: standing separately for various truths, standing together for the peace of society, and delicately avoiding that which is hateful to any of us. These are the terms of the "bargain" that the Jews are willing to strike as one of the "minorities in a pluralistic culture."

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ROBERT LEKACHMAN

THE TAX TRIMMERS

LIKE LAST year's Trade Expansion Act, President Kennedy's only consequential legislative proposal for 1962, the new tax bill, is a long, intricately detailed affair which—as is usually the case with tax measures—promises to be a lawyer's delight and a layman's labyrinth. The President has followed the precedent of the TEA in another respect, too. Just as last summer he mobilized well in advance of the Congressional season an extraordinary range of sentiment in support of a more liberal trade policy, so this year he has won the backing of a similarly broad coalition for the notion that tax reductions will serve the cause of economic growth, high employment, and unmarred prosperity. Here, however, the parallel ends, for while last year's allies remained united through the passage of TEA, this year's coalition—which comprises the Chamber of Commerce, the Committee for Economic Development, the AFL-CIO, and a large body of independent economic and editorial opinion (including that of Walter Lippmann)—is now quarreling not only about the distribution of the tax benefits, but also about the advisability of tying tax reforms to tax reductions.

The President's total program of tax cuts and tax reforms involves, at least at first glance, some impressive numbers. At the completion of all the stages of the three-year sequence of reductions and reforms, gross reductions would total $13.6 billion and the reforms would recover some $3.2–3.3 billion for the Treasury, making the net reduction in the tax burden more than $10 billion, much the largest single diminution of tax liabilities in recent history. In 1965 corporations would surrender 47 per cent of their profits instead of the 52 per cent which they now pay, and levies on the first $25,000 of profit would drop from 30 to 22 per cent—a benefit to small companies. Individual income, now taxed at rates which rise from 20 to 91 per cent would enjoy a more humane progression from 14 to 65 per cent.

If all the reforms should be enacted, the bulk of the program's benefits would go to earners of small income. However, the dramatic slash of top incremental rates would in all probability also do something to still the clamor over the adverse effects on incentives of present "confiscatory" rates. Moreover, since in real life very few people actually pay taxes at such rates, the Treasury would lose comparatively little revenue from the substitution of 65 per cent for 91 per cent as the highest marginal rate. Thus, though the President's program marks no step forward toward greater equality of income distribution, it at least does offer something for all income groups.

If the President had stopped here, with

ROBERT LEKACHMAN, chairman of the department of economics at Barnard College, is the author of *A History of Economic Ideas* and, most recently, *Varieties of Economics*.

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the tax cuts alone, he might have had a proposal of almost universal appeal. But, possibly to his present sorrow, pressure within his own Administration and in Congress led him to put forward the complicated and controversial reforms as well. For if the tax cuts are to be taken as the major triumph of the Heller wing of the Administration, the reform aspect of the program can equally be taken as the major achievement of the Surrey-Dillon-Caplin school of thought at the Treasury, backed by Wilbur Mills, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Whatever the merits of the proposed reforms and whatever the political considerations which argued for their submission to Congress at this time, there is no doubt at all that they have stirred up not one but a cluster of hornets' nests—and the insects sting just as hard when they are in the wrong as when they are in the right. The reform which now seems most likely to fail is the proposal that taxpayers only be permitted to deduct for interest payments, medical expenses, and charitable contributions that exceed 5 per cent of their income. This provision afflicts most severely middle- and upper-income groups, for it diminishes the tax savings of homeowners burdened by heavy property taxes and mortgage payments.

It seems odd politics to affront home builders and home buyers and to be gentle at the same time with oil-wealthy Texans and Oklahomans who benefit so greatly from the mineral depletion allowances. But if the President has feared to make an all-out assault upon the oil interests, he has not hesitated to fight other battles. Thus the Treasury proposes to apply ordinary income-tax rates (instead of the 25 per cent capital gains tax) to the profits realized from the exercise of stock option rights by executives. Moreover, the dividend credit and exclusion—an Eisenhower benefit to the stockholder, under which the first fifty dollars of dividend income may be excluded from the taxable total—is to be terminated. Other changes are designed to curb some of the grosser tax benefits of oil-well ownership, limit the favorable depreciation treatment of real estate, tighten the rules which govern personal holding companies, and revise the treatment of capital gains. In general these alterations would increase Treasury receipts, and the 5 per cent deduction floor would provide the bulk of the added revenues. Certain other reforms, however, would cost the Treasury money. These include broadened income-averaging arrangements, more generous child-care allowances for working mothers, and slightly more favorable terms for the elderly.

For the most part these reforms are desirable. In many instances they are the culmination of years of agitation by tax attorneys and teachers of tax law. There is little doubt that their enactment would increase the equity of the tax system and move us closer to the democratic goal of equal treatment for individuals in identical situations. And it should be plain that the equity and efficiency gains of the reforms are considerably more important than the $3.2 or $3.3 billion of additional revenue which they would raise.

APART from this, it is the minor glory of the President's approach that after hinting in his famous Yale speech and in press conference comment that a deficit should be planned as an instrument of national economic policy rather than deplored as a moral lapse on the part of thriftless politicians, he has at last expressed the idea in boldly concrete terms. Mr. Kennedy's hopes for the impact of his policy are not small. He expects an increase in "total output and economic growth . . . by an amount several times as great as the tax cut itself," reduced unemployment, stable prices, improvement in the balance of payments, higher standards of living, and expanded investment. And if Congress fails to rise to the occasion, then, says the President, an even larger deficit will follow in the wake of sluggish economic activity, a renewed

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recession, and curtailed tax revenues.

It is to Mr. Kennedy's credit as an educator that he should finally be trying to persuade Americans that the conduct of a nation is not comparable to the financial management of a household. But the educator has not dismissed the politician in the President's calculations. His political arithmeticians have computed a deficit for the fiscal year 1964 of $11.9 billion—slightly below the record Eisenhower deficit of 1959—and they have with similar deference to political numerology, if not to economic sense, kept the Administrative or Conventional Budget just under $100 billion.

But this is not all Mr. Kennedy has done to lull the fears of the timid. He has offered a pledge, reaffirmed in Congressional testimony by his new director of the budget, Kermit Gordon, that public expenditures for non-defense programs will be held at or below present levels. And finally, he has uttered some soothing private enterprise noises. The loudest of these affirms that "a massive increase in Federal spending could also create jobs and growth—but in today's setting, private consumers, employers, and investors should be given a full opportunity first."

In short, the President intends to give a cautious whirl to Walter Heller's pet argument that the American structure of progressive and corporate taxes impedes economic recovery. Heller's case runs like this: During recoveries, personal income naturally rises, but because individual tax rates are progressive, larger and larger percentages of these increases are taken by the Internal Revenue Service. Of the parallel expansions in corporate profits, less than half remains at the disposal of the corporations that earn them. The consequences are a restriction of consumer and business spending, a tendency for tax receipts to increase more rapidly than economic recovery, and a probability that the Federal budget will approach first balance and then actual surplus well in advance of full recovery. As Heller sees recent history, the economy has behaved in much this way during recent recessions. If, as critics might take note, no surpluses have actually developed, this is because the "tax brake" choked off recovery too early for the full tendencies to work themselves out during the course of a whole fiscal year—the usual unit of record. "If," says the President, "the tax brake on our economy is not released, the slack will remain, Federal revenues will lag, and budget deficits will persist."

So much for the program and its justifications. Is it an adequate program according to the Administration's own lights? Is it the program which best answers the country's economic needs? Will it really renew vigorous economic growth and reduce unemployment to the "interim" target of 4 per cent? So far as the remainder of 1963 is concerned, the prospects seem exceedingly poor that the tax program, even if it were to be passed according to the Administration's schedule, would seriously influence economic activity. In fact, increases in social security levies and in state and local taxes are likely to collect more additional tax dollars than the federal reductions would release. Really noticeable benefits would not reach taxpayers until 1964, and the full effects of the program could not be realized until 1956. Whether circumstances will justify tax cuts then is anyone's guess.

In sober truth more economists are willing to subscribe to the idea that a quick tax reduction would have an immediately stimulating effect than are eager to embrace the Heller-Kennedy doctrine that taxes are the root of all economic evil. Paul Samuelson, an Administration adviser and a supporter of the President's tax program, nevertheless has confessed doubts. In a *U.S. News and World Report* interview (February 18, 1963), he observed that "the stifling effects of our tax system have been overplayed," and added, "I do not think that tax reforms are going to do a great deal to improve

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the rate of progress." As Samuelson and many others have noted, all the great expansions since the end of the Second World War occurred in the face of an even more burdensome tax system than the current one, while the recessions of 1958 and 1960 and the incomplete recoveries which followed each of them came *after,* not before, the Eisenhower tax reductions and reforms of 1954.

It should also be noticed that the Kennedy tax cuts promise in their present form to be effective agents of high economic growth only on the assumption that some extraordinarily chancy conditions are satisfied. The most important of these is that the economy will go on expanding at its present moderate rate—and the Economic Report of the President does in fact predict continued improvement during the whole of 1963. But as the Council of Economic Advisers observes, the present recovery will be thirty-four months old if it endures through December, 1963 (just one month short of the longest postwar expansion), and there is very little in the pace of the present advance or in the plans of government which bolsters the hope that expansion will break past records. The upshot is that if the upturn were actually to end in 1963, the Administration's tax program would do literally nothing to stimulate economic activity at exactly the time when the need would have become most pressing. Last summer the evidence of impending recession was almost sufficient to persuade the President to request an immediate tax cut, unencumbered by tax reforms. It can scarcely be said that the economic picture is much brighter today than it was last July.

YET even if the cautious optimism of the Council of Economic Advisers turns out in the end to be justified, the state of the labor market and the changes taking place in the size of the labor force seriously diminish the efficacy of tax reductions as unemployment therapy. This year's labor force is likely to be 1,200,000 larger than last year's—an increase of perhaps 500,000 in excess of the year-to-year changes in the size of the labor force during the 1950's. The Council of Economic Advisers' own arithmetic implies that we shall be fortunate indeed if unemployment does not increase between now and next December. It is worth looking at the figures the Council gives.

1. To reduce unemployment from its present 5.6–5.8 range, the economy must create 1.1 million new jobs;
2. If business improves, and the prospect of finding jobs once again becomes real, another 800,000 men and women will return to the labor market;
3. An additional 1,200,000 jobs will be needed for the newcomers to the labor force;
4. Although the Council oddly omits a numerical estimate, a substantial number of jobs will also be needed to accommodate factory and office workers being displaced by technological change.

Even without the inclusion of the fourth category, 3.1 million new jobs are needed to bring the economy within sight of the 4 per cent unemployment target—and the target itself is unsatisfactory. What is called for, then, is a 4.7 per cent expansion of employment. Yet job expansion actually reached this figure only in the boom year of 1955.

From all this it seems plain that the President has tacitly written 1963 off. The staging of the tax cuts, the willingness to combine reform and reduction, and the caution of the Administration's economic forecasts for this year, point to 1964 and 1965 as the testing years. Though Kennedy supporters may well squirm at the sight of a liberal President's willingness to live during the third consecutive year of his term of office with high rates of unemployment, an economic boom in 1964 and 1965 would do much to ease their pain.

What about 1964 and 1965? Applying the simplest and most primitive of Keynesian doctrines—which discerns in deficient

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aggregate demand the source of business debility—the Administration program in effect (if not in statement) rests its 1964 and 1965 hopes on its capacity to stimulate spending. Military and space programs will add some $4.5 billion to federal spending, while the tax reductions are designed to encourage both personal consumption and business investment, the second and third components of the aggregate demand for goods and services. If consumers cooperate by spending the bulk of their tax savings, and if investors feel more buoyant because their corporations can retain more of the proceeds of investment and they themselves can keep larger portions of dividend income, the increase in national income will amount to some multiple of the tax reduction. In time increased consumer spending will strain existing plant facilities and further investment will be necessary for capacity expansion: this is the economist's "acceleration" process. Guesses about the values of the multiplier and the accelerator have more to do with the psychological condition of the guesser than with anyone's ability to estimate future consumer and investor behavior. The favorite current guess, however, is that a $10 billion net reduction in taxes should, through the combined effects of the multiplier and the accelerator, increase Gross National Product by about $30 billion, or a factor of 3.

IS THIS enough stimulation to get the economy moving and to bring unemployment down to 4 per cent? The Economic Report of the President estimates that we have at the moment sufficient unused capacity to produce between $30 billion and $40 billion of additional goods and services. Other students of the problem advance much larger numbers—as high as $70 billion. Now, if the $10 billion tax cuts were made available immediately, if the lower of the estimates as to unused capacity were accepted, and if the combined value of the multiplier and the accelerator really turned out to be 3, *then* this tax cut could probably eliminate most of our currently unused capacity, although it would still not fully meet the Administration's employment goal. But: the $10 billion tax cut will not be realized until 1965, and by then, even at current rates of investment, industrial capacity will be much larger and the labor force will comprise at least an additional 2.5 million workers. In default of a sudden leap in economic growth, therefore, the President's program is simply too small to accomplish its aims. It would seem that there is considerable accuracy in Leon Keyserling's charge that the Administration has sent a "pygmy to do a giant's job."

In 1964 and 1965, when the tax program builds to its climax, it will appear either irrelevant or inadequate. In the unlikely event of a genuine boom, tax reductions will not be needed to enlarge demand. Indeed they might have the undesired effect of increasing inflationary pressure and endangering the balance of payments. If, as is much more likely, 1964 and 1965 are recession years, then the amounts to be released are simply much too small seriously to mitigate a recession.

There is something to be said for a rapid reduction of taxes once and for all in 1963 and the simultaneous jettisoning of the tax reforms. Such seems to be the present mood of the Committee for Economic Development and the AFL-CIO.* There is, however, almost nothing to be said for a tax reduction largely postponed until 1964 and 1965. Hence the President's program seems little more promising as a long-run measure than it does as a 1963 attack upon economic sluggishness. This is a pity: much would be gained from a successful peacetime experiment with Keynesian tools. At the least,

* Indeed the President's own comments at the now famous February symposium of the American Banking Association gave powerful support to the tax cut now, tax reform later school of thought.

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public sophistication in modern economics would be enormously enhanced. As it is, a good Keynesian might well prefer no experiment to an experiment doomed to failure because of excessive timidity on the part of the experimenter.

WHAT has been said so far is designed to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Kennedy tax program as an exercise in fiscal policy. But even a better fiscal policy would not suffice to meet the economy's basic difficulties, for these difficulties belong only in part under the rubric of deficient aggregate demand. The ailments of our economy in increasing measure are structural, not fiscal. They have to do with the matching of people and skills; technological displacement of workers; inadequate education; inequitable distribution of income; urban poverty; and the allocation of national resources between the public and private sectors. The symptoms are not unknown. Take, for example, technological displacement. The argument is probably fruitless whether or not automation really amounts to a qualitative departure from the incremental changes in technology which have become more or less routine since the Industrial Revolution began. Whoever is right on this point, the facts are sufficiently grim. Solomon Fabricant of the National Bureau of Economic Research has estimated that between 1889 and 1953 physical output per man hour increased in the United States at an average annual rate of 2.3 per cent. In other words, in 1961 it was possible to produce 1960's Gross National Product with 1.5 million fewer workers. Thus if productivity increases simply at its historic rate in the coming years, at least 1.5 million workers will be displaced annually. Here is one possible figure to fill in the blank left in the Council of Economic Advisers' fourth category of job needs cited above.

No doubt a buoyant economy can soften the impact of such displacements, but ours has not been a buoyant economy. Rather it has been an economy which during the last five years has had average unemployment rates of 6 per cent. Not only that, but between 1948 and 1958 the average duration of unemployment rose from 10.3 to 14.3 weeks. In consequence, between 1958 and 1962 the country probably lost at least $170 billion of goods and services which might have been produced by *available* manpower and factories.

Much of this problem of unused human labor and talent is a problem of the cities. School drop-out rates are disconcerting, and vocational education has not adjusted to changing technical needs, all too frequently becoming a dumping ground for the backward and the delinquent. After a generation of gestures to public housing and urban redevelopment, slums still disfigure every sizable American city.

Almost unnoticed in our split-level economy, poverty has become a permanent condition for a very large slice of the urban population. As Herman Miller demonstrated in a striking article in the *New York Times Magazine* (November 11, 1962), literally nothing of consequence has happened to the distribution of income in the United States since 1944 except a moderate improvement in the position of the second richest fifth of income recipients. In 1944 the worst-paid fifth of the population received 5 per cent of the national income, and they are still stuck at this share. The top fifth, which enjoyed over 45 per cent of the national income in 1944, has maintained its position. Even in the 1960's, to be in the bottom fifth of the income distribution is to be poor in the old-fashioned sense of the word. Individuals in that category in 1960 earned on the average less than $2,800 annually, about $55 a week, a trifle over the national minimum wage level. Moreover, in the last decade the gap between the earnings of whites and Negroes, once thought to be narrowing, has changed not at all. At the beginning of the 1950's non-whites earned about three-fifths as much as whites; they are no better off today. Thus,

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the "revolution" in income distribution of which economists used to write has long since ground to a halt.

The situation of the poor is the consequence of a double failure. For one thing, market forces have not been strong enough to draw the unskilled and the ill-educated into the labor force—whereas in times of really high prosperity industry itself assumes a good deal of the burden of training workers who initially lack the skills or fall short of the standards which employers consider desirable. The second failure is public. It is a failure really to enforce anti-discrimination policies in employment, residential desegregation in housing, and racial desegregation in urban schools. It is a failure to grapple with the uncomfortable fact that the unskilled and the ill-educated stand diminishing prospects of employment. It is a failure, finally, to take the city into account. If we are not to maintain a large proportion of our urban population in angry idleness, we must do something substantial with vocational training of the young, retraining of mature workers, education in general, urban redevelopment, minority housing, and social welfare. The domestic peace corps is a gesture of good will, but it by no means constitutes a determined assault on our complex social and economic problems.

The real inadequacy of the President's tax emphasis is revealed in these needs. It may well be that our cumbersome Congress is capable of handling only one major legislative program a year, and indeed, the Administration's strategy appears to accept this limitation as a fact of life. In 1963, then, the Kennedy Administration has traded for a timid tax program its chance to make a concerted attack upon the problems of the cities in which most Americans live.

A serious program of this nature, however, requires substantial increases in public expenditures rather than tax reductions. It implies liberal financing of schools, hospitals, houses, recreation, and social agencies. The diagnosis of the poverty of the public sector of the economy offered by Galbraith in 1958 in *The Affluent Society* is no less pertinent to 1963. Resources must still be shifted from the private to the public sector. To deliberately encourage consumer purchases of automobiles, electrical appliances, and leisure articles at a time of serious public need involves a species of social insanity, and yet this is precisely what a tax cut does. Even if such a cut succeeded in stimulating aggregate demand, it would do very little to increase the production of the goods and the services which are most needed, those which add to the social investment of the public sector.

It is sometimes forgotten that there were always two Keyneses; and as a society we may be somewhat belatedly listening to the wrong one. There was the Keynes who saw nothing more grievously wrong with contemporary capitalism than inadequate aggregate demand and who contemplated no remedies more disrupting than alterations in interest rates, the supply of money, and the size of government deficits. But there was also the Keynes of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* and Chapter 24 of *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. This Keynes toyed with the euthanasia of rentiers, speculated about the possibility of a long-run decline in the rates of profits to be expected in rich countries, questioned extreme disparities of income and wealth, and wondered whether a "somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment will prove the only means of securing an approximation to full employment." The Administration's Keynes is the mild chap of the first version. But if we are to cope successfully with the problems of the 1960's, we shall have to begin paying much closer attention to what the second Keynes had to say.

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ALFRED CHESTER

EDWARD ALBEE: RED HERRINGS & WHITE WHALES

It is a truth universally acknowledged that no self-respecting piece of writing, if it wishes to be taken seriously, dare appear in public nowadays without three or four levels of meaning. The convention is part of our heritage from what in ancient times was called New Criticism and it has become the most expedient way a writer has of handing in his artistic credentials. Literature thus becomes a kind of graveyard to which the reader goes to dig up all the cadavers that have been carefully buried and labeled by the writers. And with the discovery of each new corpse, the reader cries, "Eureka!" or "Aha!" as if he never expected to find it there; the writer is held in higher esteem, and the work is recognized to be of merit. At both ends of the graveyard, it is a diverting and respectable pastime—like making up and figuring out the *Times* crossword puzzle. When all the graves have been plundered, and all the bodies sniffed and prodded, we have "the meaning" of the work.

There are any number of variations on graveyard technique, the most awesome being the one which invites the reader to do not only the exhuming, but the planting and labeling as well. We are told to supply our own meaning—"you read into it whatever you want to read into it"—and the instructions are conveyed to us by leaving out some key factor in the work: a motive, a quality of character, an object, anything whose absence functions as an absence rather than, as Mersault's lack of motive does in Camus's *The Stranger,* as a presence. J. D. Salinger, in the days when his fictions made him the Sweetheart of Sigma Chi, used the absence-as-absence technique in a sickeningly disingenuous story of enormous polish called "A Perfect Day for Bananafish." Seymour Glass (I feel as though I'm name-dropping) shoots himself for no apparent reason, but any old reason would obviously do, and we are asked to supply not the reason for the suicide but the meaning of the work. To the credit of his conscience as a man and an artist Salinger is evidently spending his literary life in atonement for that sinful story, though only with "Seymour —An Introduction" has he come to observe, or acknowledge, the rigorous difference between atonement and justification.

Now, these necrophilistinisms, while they may provide us with pre-packaged ideas, do not provide us with meaning. They may indirectly suggest the meaning of the culture that encourages them or of the person who employs them—but since the meaning of a work of art comes through the blood and nerves of the artist, we can't know the meaning except through our own blood and nerves, through our feelings. Mind comes lagging along afterward with thick lenses on, correcting themes, organizing logic, justifying diction and contradiction, and so on. To examine literature "in depth," as it is called, is to examine it at its most superficial and external. The vision and feelings of a writer are not to be found in his acquiescence to the fashion of graveyards; when the fashion changes, the graveyard will be locked (except to scholars with library passes), but the work will still exist. And its meaning will be where it always was. And except when the works are openly

Alfred Chester, who has frequently contributed criticism to these pages, is the author of a novel, *Jamie Is My Heart's Desire,* and numerous short stories.

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symbolistic or allegorical, if something in a piece of writing smells fishily symbolic or allegorical, it doesn't matter whether you uncover a red herring or a white whale, you will have uncovered nothing—you will have obscured. Melville's passion is not to be known by attributing an abstraction to Moby Dick. Kafka's anguish is not to be felt by substituting another word for castle.

THE MUCH celebrated one- and two-act talent of Edward Albee has at last come to Broadway-sized fruition and is packing them in at the Billy Rose Theater. It is a considerable talent. Albee has a sense of character and drama that isn't ordinary. He can put two people on the stage and make them immediately lifelike: they respond to each other at once, which is exciting, especially since the response is usually revulsion. He handles demotic and clichéd speech in such a way that it seems fresh. He has a sense of humor which, though it is practically always exerted at the expense of his characters, can often make you laugh out loud. And best of all, he isn't afraid of corny theatricalism—in this of course he has the blessings and the precedent of contemporary French playwrights—and possesses an energy that never seems to flag. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* has all of Albee's virtues in over-abundance, and so it is a very entertaining play, witty, absorbing, even morbidly fascinating, and sincere in that peculiarly American use of the word—that is, when the feelings in the work refer us directly back to the author rather than to his characters. Naturally, Albee is there with his literary credentials, and in a huge way; in fact, one might say that he purveys to Broadway the largest graveyard ever, not excepting Tennessee Williams. But, to his credit, Albee keeps *Virginia Woolf* so diverting that up until the end of the second act you hardly notice the smell.

Since I want to go into this play in some detail, and since there may be readers who haven't managed or wanted to get past the jammed lobby or outrageous prices at the Billy Rose, a summary of the action may be helpful. *Virginia Woolf* gives us four almost unrelievedly nasty people who for something like three-and-a-half hours, our time and theirs, take part in a drunken orgy of backbiting, bitchery, humiliation, verbal castration, exposure, and physical mauling. Among them are the following weaknesses, crimes, and sins, imputed or established, sometimes duplicated or even quadruplicated: deceit, treachery, impotence, alcoholism, abortion, incest, patricide, matricide, attempted uxoricide, phantom filicide, and others more trivial like adultery and pederasty (this last is suggested by Martha and George who refer to their son several times as "the little bugger"). The major crimes or sins, or whatever one calls them nowadays, belong mainly to the older couple—and more specifically to the husband—who are George, a history professor, and his wife Martha, daughter of the college president. Aside from their violent battles, they are notable for making frequent provocative remarks about their twenty-one year old son who is away from home. The impression given the audience is that there is something about the boy they want to hide, and that they are as mean and merciless to him as they are to each other. The younger couple, guilty of relatively puny and typically modern offenses, are Nick, an ambitious biology professor (who is a naturalistic reminiscence of the young man in *The American Dream,* and Albee doesn't like him any better) with a smug, belligerent manner, and Honey, a simpering alcoholic; they are more or less indifferent to each other, and they have no children—a fact about which much is made. You can, perhaps, already make out the design of the play, and even though there is no vital interaction or fusion between the couples (except as Nick is used by Martha to hurt George), there is enough contrast and parallel to hang an evening on.

As a result of Martha's continual exposure of George's failures, the humiliation she causes him, and her final adultery with Nick, George revenges himself by inventing a telegram which purports to bear the message that "the little bugger" is dead. The invention takes place at the end of the second act (called *"Walpurgisnacht"*) but isn't sprung upon Martha until the end of the third. What happens then is better told after taking a look at Albee's method. One good way of doing this, since it leads us through the play, is to trace the gradual revelation about the sexuality of Honey and Nick.

The first important item comes in Act

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One when George questions Nick as to whether he and Honey have children. Nick says no, not yet, and then, further on, we hear:

George: But you are going to have kids . . .
Nick (*Hedging*): Yes . . . certainly. We . . . want to wait . . . a little . . . until we're settled.

Not odd really, but odd. And about five minutes later, we have the following:

Honey: Oh, it's late. . . . We should be getting home.
George (*Nastily, but he is so preoccupied he hardly notices his own tone*): For what? You keeping the baby sitter up, or something?
Nick (*Almost a warning*): I told you we didn't have children.
George: Mm? (*Realizing*) Oh, I'm sorry. I wasn't even listening . . . or thinking . . . whichever one applies.
Nick (*Softly, to Honey*): We'll go in a little while.

Now we smell a set-up. George is preoccupied because his wife, Martha, has mentioned the little bugger—in spite of George's warnings—and also because she is changing her clothes. If Nick speaks warningly, he has already proved so belligerent that we cannot distinguish one more hostility; and when he says to Honey that they will soon go, he is merely replying to her statement. It is all so neat and crafty, we almost overlook the fact that they are talking about children again, but when we do realize it, the deviousness of the writing raises the subject to prominence. Suspense enters, very subtly, very cleverly.

Things become more obvious in the second act, in dialogue between George and Nick, while Honey is off stage sick-drunk with Martha attending her.

George: Your wife throws up a lot, eh?
Nick: I didn't say that . . . I said she gets sick quite easily.
George: Oh. I thought by sick you meant . . .
Nick: Well, it's true . . . She . . . does throw up a lot. Once she starts . . . there's practically no stopping her . . . I mean, she'll go right on . . . for hours. Not all the time, but . . . regularly.
George: You can tell time by her, hunh?
Nick: Just about.
George: Drink?
Nick: Sure. . . . I married her because she was pregnant.
George: (*Pause*) Oh? (*Pause*) But you said you didn't have any children . . . When I asked you, you said . . .
Nick: She wasn't . . . really. It was a hysterical pregnancy. She blew up, and then she went down.
George: And while she was up, you married her.

"Throws up" and "regularly" and "tell time by her"—what George has in mind is clear, or anyway clear enough, though the references are still veiled. Then Nick does something which is preposterously out of character, given what we know of him and his relationship to George: he tells about his marriage. The strangeness and suddenness of this confession make us hark back to the set-up in Act One, and we accept the unlikely because it explains what has gone before. Now, his confession is: "I married her because she was pregnant," and not: "because I *thought* she was pregnant." However, a moment later Nick admits to having married Honey because she was rich and suggests that he did not sleep with her before they married. Now the complications really abound, a new "depth" is achieved, and another character has been made to reveal himself as a cad of the first water; in this case Nick, through all these present betrayals of Honey and past betrayals of his own feelings.

Matters come to a head through George's treachery, but nothing is clarified. Having been humiliated and exposed by Martha and having been humiliated also by Nick who flirts openly with Martha (Honey is too drunk to notice), George tells an animal story in which he makes it clear to Honey that Nick has told him of her pregnancy. Honey realizes that Nick has betrayed her, and though she becomes hysterical, she too gives away no vital information. So if we come out enlightened in any way, it is with the knowledge that everyone on stage, except poor Honey, who will have her turn later, is if possible fouler than we thought.

And this brings us to the climactic dialogue, or *monologue à deux*, at the end of Act Two. Martha and Nick are off in the kitchen making—it would be silly to call it

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love—preparing, then, additional torments for George as well as a possible step up the ladder of success for Nick (Martha's father being head of the college). George, on stage alone, is joined by Honey, who has until then been sleeping it off. She enters, stupefied. This stupor, which at first looks like a clumsy technical device justifiable only on the grounds that the playwright is determined to make even egoless, stupid, terrified Honey an active as well as passive perpetrator of horror, is really part of Albee's plot to get us, willy nilly, into a position where we will have rather more than one foot in the graveyard.

Here is the relevant speech made by Honey in her stupor: "No! . . . I don't want any . . . I don't want them . . . Go 'way . . . (*Begins to cry*) I don't want any . . . any . . . children . . . I . . . don't . . . want . . . any . . . children. I'm afraid! I don't want to be hurt . . . Please!" Ah, at last, Honey Macbeth is going to spill the beans. In fact, it seems, she has already spilled them, for what follows is:

> George (*Nodding his head . . . speaks with compassion*): I should have known.
> Honey (*Snapping awake from her reverie*): What! What?

And we cry with her, what, what?

> George: I should have known . . . the whole business . . . the headaches . . . the whining . . . the . . .
> Honey (*Terrified*): What are you talking about?

Yes, George, what are you talking about? Hangover? Frustration? Frigidity?

> George (*Ugly again*): Does he know that? Does that . . . stud you're married to know about that, hunh?

More confusion. More suspense. And more and more when Honey suddenly reacts not only to what George says but to George himself.

> Honey: About what? Stay away from me!

Does she want George because of what he's discovered and is she therefore projecting her heat upon him? In any case, George assures her that his intentions are not sexual, and he adds ". . . How do you do it? . . . How do you make your secret little murders studboy doesn't know about, hunh? Pills? Pills? You got a secret supply of pills? Or what? Apple jelly? Will power?"

So the truth is out at last. But what truth? We are being dumped into the graveyard. "Murder" (even when qualified by "little") is a loaded word here: its violence is intended mainly to remind us that George has not denied killing his mother and father and has, before our eyes, attempted to strangle his wife. For we realize that, after all, Honey has said nothing, and George's mind has said all. But if Honey is by turns conveniently stupefied and conveniently silent, she is also conveniently frightened. Somehow George has hit home. And so has Albee—he has impugned Honey and further impugned George by showing his cruelty to her. We begin to realize that the "truth" about Nick and Honey's reproductory dilemma will never be revealed as an objective fact—and things galore start happening in the graveyard. *Rashomon* looms up, Ionesco gets to work, Pirandello pirouettes upon a tombstone. The inscriptions are tantalizing insofar as they are a little blurred. Excitement. *Of course,* my dear, the *truth* is that we cannot *know* the truth! All the red herrings, since they're meant as red herrings, are magically turned into big white whales.

If there are any further doubts that the play has been relegated to the graveyard, they are allayed at the beginning of Act III, when Nick is revealed by Martha to be impotent, and since he doesn't deny it—"You should try me some time when we haven't been drinking for ten hours, and maybe . . ."—and since there is no evidence beyond the confusion I've indicated, his impotence becomes dramatic reality. Looking back upon everything, we can come up with gorgeous variations and conjectures. Yet, it all seems so trivial; and the more Albee imposes his method, the more trivial it seems. His design—scheme perhaps would be a better word—is so labored, so crafty, so unfree, and the satisfaction it gives us is the satisfaction of noticing an intricate shelf-arrangement at the supermarket. Look at the climactic scene once more, the scene between Honey and George. Shortly after the dialogue I've reported, George gets the

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idea for the telegram, and this perfects the climax. It links up both couples and their respective reproductive organs, and completes the balance. We have one pair, Martha and Nick, in the act of creation (offstage, to be sure) and the other pair in the act of destruction. And what irony there is when you reflect that Nick turns out to be impotent and that Martha is probably past menopause. Yet the total effect is, finally, that it is all contrivance and that if the contrivance functions at all in the play, it functions to conceal the fact that the author is really out to do one thing: get his characters. And this impression becomes stronger during the last ten minutes.

For then! Oh, then! Symbols crashing, all styles mashing, allegories splashing—*Enter the Playwright, in the guise of gravedigger.*

As Albee did in his first play, *The Zoo Story,* so does he in *Virginia Woolf,* but on a much more lavish scale—and why not? This is Broadway. He introduces a new, and apparently vital, element just moments before the show ends. It is a surprise, but no ordinary surprise ending, with the usual little thrill and the usual little shadow cast upon the author's integrity. It is, in its way, a surprise beginning, for it informs us that it has been on stage the whole time only we haven't known about it, and it makes extraordinary retroactive claims for having been chief motive, main symbol, and primal blueprint. In *The Zoo Story,* it isn't until the suicide-murder is effected that it goes back to become Jerry's aim throughout the play. And in *Virginia Woolf,* it is not until George tells Martha their son is dead that we discover there is no son and never was one, that "the little bugger" is an invention, and that the couple are barren and have been play-acting at having a son for the last twenty-one years and/or three acts and/or three-and-a-half hours.

Albee prepares for it, first of all, by calling attention to the play itself, to the fact that it is *Théâtre,* and that it is all absurd and ridiculous anyway, just like the French playwrights say, so let's make fun of it for a minute.

> George (*Appearing in the doorway, the snapdragons covering his face; speaks in a hideously cracked falsetto*): Flores; flores para los muertos. Flores.

These flowers are, I don't have to tell you, that bunch of forget-me-not red herrings that passed behind the scrim in *A Streetcar Named Desire.* Later, still calling attention to the play by the use of ritualism, Albee calls attention to the Church by the use of prayer. Martha and George go trancing and prancing, she into rhetoric, he into Latin: *"Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda. . . ."* And then we have the surprise itself. And we are nose-deep in The Play, Absurdity, Truth, Illusion and Reality, Faith and Science, the Past and the Present, the Emptiness of Human Life, and all the other carrion of fashionable intellect. I know it isn't cricket to ask, but what is the relationship between the surprise and the body of the play? What is different if we know the "truth" at the beginning or at the end?

The imaginary son, when revealed to be imaginary, has two seemingly equally important heads: one of them says that his parents are barren and the other one says they have created an illusion to sustain themselves with. Now, while the little bugger may be imaginary, he is neither the product nor the means of self-deception, for Martha and George are perfectly conscious of the fact that their son is a fiction.

> George: You know the rules, Martha! For Christ's sake, you know the rules! . . . You broke our rule, baby. You mentioned him . . . you mentioned him to someone else.

In other words, they know he isn't real—or why would they want to hide his existence? They know he is an illusion, and I can't, whether Albee wants me to or not, accept that human beings may be sustained by illusions they know to be such. What might possibly sustain them is the anguish, the lovely anguish, that comes when a man pretends to believe in what he wishes were true but knows is not. And this, directly more than indirectly, is an acknowledgment of reality, a facing of reality. So if the little bugger has two heads, the second does nothing but talk of the first, and the first says: sterility.

Sterility is our enlightenment, Albee's surprise. And in looking back upon the play, we find that the difference is all in ourselves. We feel something we didn't feel when the play was in the cruel fertile land:

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compassion. Every time the little bugger is mentioned, we hear "barrenness" instead. And Martha and George become less horrible. Anyway their blackness is less black, somewhat grayer. But our compassion comes only through our rewriting of the play—and evidently Albee did not want this or he would have done it himself. What he allows us, in fact, after the surprise, is pity, and the feeling of pity is always a kind of judgment. Our feelings tell us the truth. The playwright has walked out on stage with bench and gavel, full of self-righteousness, and has passed sentence on his characters: "Martha and George, for abominable behavior, for immoral actions, for being wicked parents and evil people, I hereby sentence you to sterility by retroaction." They become sterile by decree, not by virtue of dramatic reality. And no sooner do we feel this than we are aware that he has been imposing punishments on these people from the beginning—the chiefest of them being the length of time they must appear before us naked, deceitful, gruesome. It is only then, after the completion of their tortuous punishment, that the spectator is permitted some pity. And Martha and George go hobbling off alone, barren. No wonder the play is successful on Broadway; it provides the audience with a guided tour away from, and safely back at last into, the most repugnant kind of puritanical priggishness. The morality of *Virginia Woolf* is one which conceives that folly, desperation, frustration, hate, are not themselves their greatest penalties—as virtue is said to be its own reward—but must be judged and punished from above, beyond, without.

With our new knowledge, we look back upon Honey and Nick, and what do we see? The same unlovable pair. But now perhaps we see something we noticed earlier in a clearer light. In literature, as in life, unlovable people often get that way because they are unloved. And Mr. Albee does not love Honey and Nick; he hates them, maybe even more than he hates the other couple. He has pursued them through the play, tirelessly, relentlessly, whispering and shouting dark accusations, and although he has imposed upon them the same sentence given to Martha and George, he has done it so deviously that they can never come to Edward Albee's kind of grace—pity from the audience.

An excellent theme for the graduate student: the artist as judge. And it might prove interesting as a sociological phenomenon: "In the mid-20th century, writers, conscious of the moral breakdown . . . etc., etc." To all the other judges, the artist is now added. He too joins the world of loveless, wisdomless, truthless people who despise rather than comprehend. It is certainly a tempting thing to do in the face of the horror that surrounds us—to say: world, you are so awful and disgusting, I will not understand you. But who except saints and artists ever tried to understand mankind? Everyone else always tried to improve it—or own it or destroy it. Well, perhaps mankind cannot be improved, only made more comfortable. Or, perhaps after all it can. But no one was ever made better by judgment and hate, and it seems a bit silly for a writer deliberately to limit himself to the useless, even for the pleasure of sticking his tongue out at the world. It only means the world has finally won, that stupidity and lies have triumphed. And then, of course, the only proper place to look for art, as well as meaning, is in the graveyard.

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BORIS WEISS

REILLY AND I

LIKE MOST American Jews of my generation, I haven't had much experience with anti-Semitism. Nor, as I look back, have I ever been very clear in my feelings about it. I grew up during the 1930's in what is now known as suburbia, and there was, occasionally, something in the air that would be described today as interreligious tension. By the time I was six I had learned to say that the Romans had killed Christ and to react to the name "mocky" by saying "I'm a Jew —and proud of it," or, if I stood a chance, "Put up your hands when you say that." But in green and quiet Elmora, nice Jewish children were more likely to encounter winks and snickers than outright abuse, and in a neighborhood where Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish boys were equally caught up in their web of intricate and shifting alliances, there were usually more urgent reasons to get into a fight. I knew why some of my friends' parents were excessively polite to me, but I also knew—and much more sharply—why my mother was excessively uncomfortable and my father was excessively rude to some of these friends. For anti-Semitism was really a threat to me only in my own home.

The source of the threat lay in what I sensed about my parents, the lingering in their life of another life, whose darkness and ugliness and fear were also present in their word "*goy*"—the only Yiddish word that they habitually used. It was around these two words—"*goy*" and "mocky"—that my sense of belonging to a people organized itself: the Reform Sunday schools, with their museum-like spirit, had nothing to do with it. Behind these two words extended the only emotional realities that tied me to a Jewish past: to the slum streets of Linden, New Jersey, where we still went to see my grandmother and where my father had been regularly beaten up as a boy when he carried his pack of window glass through the streets; and to the farm in central New Jersey where my mother's family lived through their bitter failures, surrounded by the community of "*goyim*" who hated them. So, at least, I was told and readily believed. But in Elmora most of my closest friends were *goyim,* and in my heart I hated that ugly, undiscriminating name as much as I hated "mocky." Inasmuch as I heard the first one a hundred times more frequently than the second, I grew up with a very uncertain sense of Jewish loyalty.

During the war years and their aftermath of revelation, there was no problem about hating anti-Semites, but it was a hatred whose fierceness was often abstract since it had to cross the ocean and attach itself to a people I had seen only in the movies, and since the movies themselves with all of those sleek, deadly Nazis and those rumpled, defenseless victims had left me, at bottom, more frightened than inflamed. In the two years I spent in the

BORIS WEISS is the pseudonym of a young writer who lived for some time in a suburb of New York City.

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Navy after the war, I had several furious fights with Jew-baiters, but mainly I learned to play the service game of good-naturedly insulting each other's religion, nationality, or region. This comedy of "yids" and "wops" and "ridge runners" performed much the same function for men living in close quarters that "the dozens" had in high school, but it also weakened my Jewish ties in the course of relaxing them. During the following years, I found that the whole issue of being a Jew in America had become relaxed. This was true of the society at large but it was particularly true of the university communities in which I spent most of the next twelve years. In their self-consciously liberal atmosphere, one could even have the feeling that it paid to be Jewish; and what anti-Semitism there was seemed genteel enough to be adopted by a good many Jewish students and faculty members. As for myself, I had at some point drawn a comfortable blanket of indifference over my old uncertainties, which I called tolerance.

All of which is to say that I came into the following situation with little preparation and considerable confusion.

WHYTE ROAD is a quiet-looking street in an outlying section of metropolitan New York. On one side is a long row of brick colonial one-families that were put up just before the war. On the other side, the houses are older and somewhat dilapidated, many of them going back to the period when the area was first settled by Irish families who had made their way up the ladder of the municipal bureaucracies. There are also two small apartment buildings that house working-class families, and between them is a long, low semi-mansion that appears to have inadvertently strayed onto the block from the expensive hills that lie behind it. At the bottom of Whyte Road two tall and rather sleazy apartment houses have recently gone up and brought a number of foreign faces to the neighborhood. At the top is an expanse of woods and grounds that forms the landscape of a fashionable private school. In short, Whyte Road is a diversely representative block. Although its more or less settled life—half-Catholic, half-mixed—is beginning to be nibbled at by the tides of change, there are still no Negroes or Puerto Ricans living there and its dominant tone is still set by the row of brick colonials that gaze out from behind their polished storm windows and rose trellises with composed, if somewhat prim, expressions. It was into one of these houses that we moved, having just come to New York and being mainly concerned about finding a "healthier environment" than that of the Manhattan streets for our two small boys.

Within a short time, it became clear that we represented part of the phalanx of new types that were entering the neighborhood and were going to change it for the worse. Certainly, we had little to commend us as solid middle-class citizens: we moved into the house with very little furniture and were slow to acquire the rest; we were relatively indifferent to the patch of shrubbery in front and the patch of lawn in back; we did not keep regular hours but often typed or played music late at night; we shouted at our children and let them shout at us. My wife was a graduate student; she also wore her hair long and in warm weather liked to go barefoot around the house. All of this seems to have been carefully noticed. Our two boys, ages six and four, who had grown up in the graduate student enclaves and had been left free to develop their own individual manners and fantasies, must have seemed no less strange to the bunch of TV-oriented hellers on the block, ranging from four to eleven, that was known as "the Gang." Though we gave no wild parties and though I appeared five days a week in the vestments of the young executive, we eventually came to be identified as what passes on Whyte Road for "beatniks."

Since the house we had rented could have used some external improvements in

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the way of painting, cementwork, and storm windows, and since we had no reason to make them, it soon acquired something of our own indifferent, provisional air. The only other house in the row that appeared to suffer from similar neglect was owned by an Irish saloon owner named Reilly, who had five young children, four of whom soon proved to be the terrors of the block. However, the baby of the family, a blond, tough-looking angel of five named Sean, soon became fast friends with our four-year-old, Jason, and every so often Reilly's big white Chrysler would pull up to where my wife was waiting for a bus and in his fierce Irish brogue he would offer to taxi her around. But for all that, our six-year-old, Davy, was regularly getting clobbered by the Gang, which was led by Jimmy Reilly, a lithe, gangling boy of eleven who was already a furtive version of his father. Reilly himself looked like a retired professional football lineman and had, in fact, been a star performer in the rough Irish sport known as hurley. As a father, he was a first-class tyrant, and to see him marching his five children along Whyte Road for their Sunday walk—"stand up straight and none of your nonsense"—was at least partly to understand why Davy was undergoing such a prolonged initiation of shoves, punches, and twisted arms at the hands of Jimmy's Gang.

Mainly, the Gang consisted of the four Reilly children and whoever else happened to be getting along with them at the time. Timmy, Dennis, and Michael Murphy were usually *in,* Johnny and Jimmy Loomis were in and out, and Craig and Malcolm Goodman were kept out as much as possible by their parents because the diminutive Craig had had his spleen ruptured during a free-for-all that year with Jimmy and Paddy Reilly. Now and then Davy would be let in for a few hours and would return home with a blissful smile; but more often than not, he was barred from the Loomis's yard which was the headquarters of the Gang, and since our house was directly across the street, he was eaten up by the sense of being left out. More often, Jason was let into the yard and the Gang, but he, too, spent a good deal of time standing on the other side of the Loomis's fence while the Gang hammered away at their clubhouse or each other, pausing now and then to tell the two boys to go back to Boston.

Like all the mothers on the block with the exception of Mrs. Reilly—a bizarre-looking recluse, who having spawned this brood seemed to have decided that no further demands were to be made on her—my wife kept a close watch on the doings of the Gang. At any moment a rock fight could break out, or Tommy or Paddy, who was only a year younger and smaller, would suddenly explode and send one of the children home limping or bleeding. In order to protect Davy and perhaps ease his way into the Gang, I began to go out once or twice a weekend to catch Tommy's "bullet passes," and, as winter drew on, the Gang's snowballs. All of which got me accepted, but it didn't do much good for Davy. He was becoming visibly upset by the situation, and I wavered back and forth between scolding him for not getting along with other children and giving him pep talks and boxing lessons.

DURING the Christmas season Jason had a birthday party and Sean Reilly came with a present addressed to "Jacob." It seemed like an innocent mistake, but shortly after that Sean stopped coming to the house to play with him. The Reilly Chrysler now went sailing past my wife as she waited at the bus-stop. I met Tommy Reilly on the way to school one morning and he gave me a dirty smile and said, "How come Davy and Jason are Jews?"

I answered bluntly: "Because I am."

This seemed to confuse him. "How come you are?"

"Because I want to be." Certain things began to fall into line and I said in an

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angry way, "What's it to *you,* Tommy?"

"Nothing." He looked sheepish, and, as I frequently did, I brushed aside the fact that he was making my child miserable and regarded him as a boy with problems of his own, a dumb, troubled kid who was probably being filled with poison by his parents. "It's okay to be a Jew," I said gently. "It's not much different from being Catholic."

But he seemed even more nervous and perplexed to hear that. "Why don't you give Davy a break?" I suggested for probably the twentieth time, in one way or another.

"It's the other kids don't like him," he replied for the twentieth time, in one way or another.

We had been living in the neighborhood for five or six months now, and except for the trouble the children were having, our life went along fairly well. Our friends were in Manhattan, but my wife developed a pleasant relationship with some of the other mothers, particularly with Mrs. Murphy, a stronghearted young immigrant with four children and a three-room flat. Her middle son, Dennis, was a toughy who was fazed by nothing, but both the older and younger boys were more "sensitive" as she said, and so she had her own problems with the Reillys. Both Dennis and Michael, who were our children's age, came frequently to the house, and Davy also began to get on better with the Loomis and Goodman children. It was only when the Reillys were out on the block and the Gang formed again that real trouble would start.

One Saturday morning toward the beginning of spring, I looked out the window to see Davy being hemmed in by five or six boys. Tommy Reilly whispered something to Sean, who then jumped at Davy and doubled him up with a punch to the stomach. Imagining another ruptured spleen, I ran outside. Davy had only had his wind knocked out, but I lost my temper and loudly demanded that the boys stay away from Davy and for that matter from the front of our house. This was a pointless way to handle the Reillys as they made clear a few minutes later when they sent the eight-year-old Annie and Sean to stand in front of the house—their arms folded, their tongues out.

I should have gone out and spanked them hard but I didn't. In the afternoon, I went down the street to speak to the parents. Mrs. Reilly came to the door in a bathrobe and slowly blinked her eyes at me. My wife had once been invited in for tea and had said it was like visiting a mental patient. So it seemed to me: behind Mrs. Reilly one sensed a house of dim, still, disordered rooms. I said to her that my children and hers weren't getting on, as perhaps she'd noticed, and asked if she'd mind speaking to them. She had noticed and she minded; her dazed-looking face suddenly hardened. "Yeh, it's your two brats who is causing all the trouble." I said it was probably being caused on both sides, but it was my children who were being beaten up. We then got into a useless argument over whether Tommy and Paddy hit five-year-old children. There was no communicating with Mrs. Reilly, and shaking my head, I went back down the steps.

"Don't shake your head at me, you dirty. . . ."

She didn't finish it, but in the months that followed her children did. Up until then, my two boys knew they were Jewish in much the same way they knew that they had cousins who lived in Virginia. The previous Christmas Jason had wanted us to put wreaths in the window but forgot about it when he found he was going to a Chanukah party instead. However, being Jewish now began to matter a great deal. They would come home once a month or so with tales of being called a dirty Jew by the Reillys, and since they could see that we were upset by the news, they wanted to know what a Jew really was. I found that I didn't have much to

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tell them. Meanwhile, they were picking up some further religious instruction. One evening my wife overheard them carrying on one of their bedtime conversations that went something like this:

Jason: "You know what? Sean says he can do anything he wants now."

Davy: "Because he's Irish?"

Jason: "Because he's been to the Holy Communion. He can swear and everything and it won't be a 'ternal sin."

Davy: "Big deal."

Jason: "Do you wish you were Irish?"

Davy: "Of course not. We're Jewish."

Jason: "God's son was Irish. He was Jewish till he got up on the cross. Then he became Irish."

Davy: "We don't *believe* he was God's son. He was just a human being."

Jason: "If he was God's son, how could the Jewish have catched him? . . ."

ONCE OR TWICE I asked the advice of my next-door neighbor, who I suspected was once a Jew but now seemed to dabble in Ethical Culture. Still, he was a psychologist and appeared to be an eminently sane man. That the Reilly children were saying "dirty Jew" didn't trouble him much and he advised me to go slow. "You won't get anywhere with the old man. He'll deny it and so will the kids because they're afraid he'll kill them." Then he asked me if I wanted him to try and talk to Reilly. I said no. I'd try to handle it myself.

But I didn't handle it. I merely blew hot and cold. I would envision taking a firm, aggressive stand (Jews have to hit back: remember Germany) or a detached and patient one (maintain dignity: it'll blow over if you don't make it worse). But by the next day, either stand would melt away and I would resume my equivocal behavior. I would tell Davy and Jason to fight back, but then I would pull them into the house and lecture them if they seemed to be starting the trouble. I glared at the Reilly children one weekend; the next, I was out in the street teaching Tommy how to throw a "sinker," after which I would deliver a few homilies about people getting along together.

My wife reacted differently. What was going on enraged her and she had little use for my conciliatory behavior. To her, the issue of anti-Semitism was simply part of the "crap" that the Reillys were dishing out and that she wasn't going to take. She believed that Tommy Reilly could be persuaded on religious grounds, and talked to him in a serious way about the sinfulness of his behavior, but otherwise she lashed out in no uncertain terms. At times I thought she was "over-reacting" and said that the Gang would get back at her through the children, that we shouldn't protect them *too* much, that they had "to learn to fight their own battles." I told her to be more detached; she told me to be more concerned; frequently we got into arguments.

Most of the hostility came now from the two youngest Reilly children, Annie and Sean, which seemed to confirm my belief in suasiveness as the best policy. The situation, too, blew hot and cold. For a week, I might come home from work to find the Gang camped on our porch, each of them peacefully being defeated at checkers by Davy and sometimes by Jason. But the following week another incident would erupt: Davy or Jason had been set upon, our maid had been called a "dirty nigger," Paddy Reilly had screamed abuse at my wife, and the war would be on again for another few days. Meanwhile, I avoided, or rather evaded, a confrontation with Reilly.

But eventually it came. Around the following Christmas, the "dirty Jews" resumed in force and now they were coming from the Murphy and Loomis children as well as from Joey Appello, a seven-year-old in the Murphy's building who was running with the Gang. I went out one Sunday morning to shovel snow, and there down the block was Reilly directing his three boys. "You'll get your jaw broken," I said to myself, but even that

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seemed better than the miserable feelings of shame and fear that I had been carrying around. I reminded myself that I was not a small man and that I had once been a pretty good boxer. In any case, I had to act. I put down my shovel and walked down the block.

"I WANT TO HAVE a word with you," I said to Reilly. My voice was surprisingly firm, though one of my feet was jumping madly inside my shoe.

"What about?" He looked me up and down as though I might have been a panhandler.

"Your kids are calling my kids dirty Jews. I think you should make them cut it out."

"Who're you?"

"I'm Davy and Jason's father. I live up the block." I felt foolish at answering him and hurried on. "Too many Jews have been killed because people didn't set their children straight."

He drew himself up to his full height and spread out his shoulders. "Yeah, well now I was in the army, same as you. I fought for this country. You watch what you're saying now. You watch your step."

Up close, his red flaring face had a good deal of fat in it. If it came to that, I saw it was a face you could hit and hurt. Perhaps I was even seeing in that fat a trace of the coward who was supposed to live inside each bully. I met his eyes and said, "Would you like your children to be called 'micks'? Would you like them to be pushed around because they're Irish?"

"Push *my* boys around?" He narrowed his eyes. "Don't *you* try any of that stuff now."

He called over the older boys who, white with fear, denied that they ever would use such words as "dirty Jew." We passed on to Sean. At this, Reilly's cheeks trembled with rage. "Why he's just a baby!"

I moved back a step and clenched my fist, but no blows were struck. It ended with each of us demanding that the other keep his kids "where they belong." This was not what I had come to demand. I knew that an hour from now the Reilly children would be standing on the line that separated my share of the sidewalk from my neighbor's and would remind my wife or myself that it was a free country. I hadn't settled anything; I had merely lunged into an argument that I had no strength to conclude. I went back up the street with the feeling that another Jew, firmer in his sense of outrage or steadier in his convictions, would have driven the matter to a better conclusion, would have broken through those tenacious, stupid responses with stronger words or a good punch to the face. I pondered the matter as carefully as I could. Was it merely that I had been afraid of him because he was somewhat bigger than I was and probably handier with his fists? Not entirely. Earlier in my life, I would have swallowed the same fear, and driven by rage would have offered to fight and would have gone through with it. The issue was what had happened to my power to feel rage at such a man. The truth was that I had fallen immediately into the same indecisiveness I had fallen into with his children. All my combative feelings from the past were gone—or, rather, were buried under the soft, deep layers of liberal tolerance and reasonableness, and also of self-irony about standing up as a Jew. My physical cowardice could have been overcome; it was the moral cowardice I was discovering in myself that appalled me. The real issue was whether "dirty Jew" meant anything else to me in my thirty-second year of easy assimilated life than would hearing that my children were being called "dirty Russians." If it meant nothing else, then I had worked up a spurious outrage, which had betrayed me, instead of accepting the consequences of my detachment. To do so would have been to follow the advice of my neighbor and deal with the Reillys as nothing more than a neighborhood nuisance. On the other hand, if I was all that committed to Jewish loyalty, then I

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had allowed myself to be betrayed into a false tolerance instead of accepting the consequences of a deliberate, intransigent opposition to the Reillys, which meant making use of whatever measures were available. Either way, I would have been a support to my children. As it was, I could only pass on to them my sickly confusion about Jewish loyalty and my fear of consequences.

But I still came to no real resolution, and from that point on, as though in judgment of my behavior, our situation on the block deteriorated and the hostility spread. By April, my wife was fighting Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Loomis, and their children were frequently as insolent to us and as tormenting to our children as the Reillys were. Otherwise, the neighbors seemed as wary of us as they were of the Reillys: the main thing was that the peace on the block was being disturbed. During the week of Easter vacation, there were several incidents. Kimmy, a little Korean boy who had recently moved into the neighborhood and had become Davy's and Jason's one friend, began to be pushed around and called a "dirty Chinese." Our maid, Ruth, brought her three-year-old daughter with her one day and sent her out to play. In a short while she was surrounded by the Gang. "Little nigger, how come your hands are so dirty?" they chanted. "Little nigger, go back where you came from." Ruth rushed outside with blood in her eyes, but the taunts continued from the Loomis's front steps where the Gang—unhampered by their parents—were to take up a more or less permanent position for the rest of the week. Facing them, on our steps, sat the enemy—Davy, Jason, Kimmy, and Sherry. An hour later, the Gang raced across the street, grabbed Jason's rifle, and carried it off to the Reillys' house. Ruth gathered the four children together and marched off to the Reillys' to get back the gun. Just then Mr. and Mrs. Reilly returned from Holy Week Services and a wild argument broke out in the street.

"You better get out of here before I turn you over to the FBI," shouted Reilly.

"You're gonna turn who over?" said Ruth.

"You. You're working for them Communist agents up the street. They've got you over here to stir up trouble."

"Oh Christ," said Ruth. "How do you know they're Communists?"

"Ah, she's always running off somewhere. Up to no good, I'll tell you that."

Ruth laughed in his face.

"You better go back where you come from," shouted Reilly. "I'll have you put in jail. We don't want your kind around here."

"You big bag of wind," said Ruth. "Who do you think you're talking to? You think I'm afraid of you?"

"I've got plenty of money and I'll get you put in jail where you belong."

"Well, I'll first hit you over the head with this rifle, like you deserve."

So the incident was reported to me that evening. The next evening I came home to hear that my wife and the children had been followed down the block by ten or twelve children screaming, "Heil Hitler. Go back to Russia, you dirty Communists."

Clearly, something had to be done. I called St. Anne's, the parish church and school, and arranged to see a priest the following evening. I asked Mr. Hahn, Kimmy's father, if he wished to go with me. He was quite willing. I then called up Alex Goodman, who the day before had had to pull Tommy Reilly off his already spleen-less son Craig. Alex, a careful man who was a home-owner on the block, thought I was doing the right thing, but declined to go with us. "It'll be too much like ganging up," he said. "But if you need any corroborating testimony, I'll be glad to provide it."

The next evening Mr. Hahn and I drove over to St. Anne's. Father Donley received us in the rectory and said that he had only a few minutes but would be very

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glad to speak to us. I rapidly told him of the events of the past week and some of the background of our relations with the Reillys. Then Mr. Hahn, a shy but precise physicist, spoke of Kimmy's problems on the block.

Father Donley heard us out, and meditated for a moment with a slight frown and pursed lips. Then, in a voice that seemed permanently softened by all the suasive words it had spoken, he said: "Well, if our children are saying these things, it's in spite of what we teach them and not because of what we teach them."

I said I was willing to believe that. Still the fact remained that four of his children had been infected with vicious teachings in their home and were infecting other of his children.

He nodded. "Of course that is of concern to us. Now what shall we do about it?"

"Mr. Reilly seems to be a pious man," I said, "We thought he might listen to you."

"But then again, he may deny everything you've told me."

I said that I wouldn't be surprised. "The best way might be to meet with Mr. Reilly and several of us from the block."

Father Donley thought that might be a good possibility. "Now how do you spell his name? Is it R-i-l-e-y or R-e-i-l-l-y. It might even be R-e-i-l-l-e-y."

I didn't know.

"Hmm, that's a problem then. It would be very helpful to know the correct spelling."

Mr. Hahn suggested that there was probably only one family with that name living in the 5500 block on Whyte Road.

"Now you say that he has four children in our school. What are their names and grades?"

I gave the names and guessed at the grades.

"Well, I'll try to say a word to each of them when school resumes. It's Easter vacation, you know." He stood up and smiled at Mr. Hahn, then smiled at me.

I asked him if he would like my phone number so that he could call me when he had arranged a meeting with Mr. Reilly.

"Oh yes. That would be very helpful."

I reiterated that the situation on the block was growing very tense and that it might be a good idea to call Mr. Reilly as soon as possible.

Father Donley nodded. "I quite understand. These things do have a way of getting out of hand, don't they?"

In the days that followed, the children played in the backyard with Kimmy, and I waited for Father Donley to call. I didn't think he would and I was right. Possibly he spoke to Reilly or the children, for the block settled down again, though this may also have been due to the removal of Tommy Reilly to a hospital where he was treated for several weeks for his "ammonia."

After the events of Easter week, my wife and I stayed apart from the neighborhood and kept to a firm line. Along with Ruth, we encouraged the children to fight back. No boxing lessons now: merely the consistent permission to hit. One day Davy suddenly whaled the tar out of the younger Loomis boy, who had been bullying him for the past twenty months, and after that things began to go a bit more smoothly for him on the block. After a month or two my wife and I thought we saw progress in the improved relations between the children and the Gang. It was then that we weakened. To Davy's seventh birthday party we invited some of his new friends from the Gang. None of them came.

THAT EVENING the area around our house was buzzing again. The Gang moved up and down the street, casting smirks at us and singing "Happy birthday, damn Davy." The following day, the Gang became the Club. Each of them sported an army divisional patch that they had picked up from somewhere. All the children on the block were included—except ours, the Goodmans', and Kimmy.

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It was a wild day, full of marching and scheming and sudden fights. Alex Goodman demanded that his two boys be given patches and be let into the Club. I don't know whether he succeeded or not; my wife regarded him with contempt and told our boys about the Nazis. The next day we went to the beach, and that evening were dressing to go out when we heard Jason's unmistakable scream. Half-dressed, I ran outside. Down the block the Club was bunched in the middle of the street. As they ran away I saw Jason lying there and Joey Appello giving him a final kick in the head, TV-style.

I picked up my screaming child and carried him home. Somehow he had escaped serious injury, and though bruised and badly frightened, he was soon describing in cheerful detail how he had been lured away from the house. I finished dressing and went outside. It was dark now and the street deserted. I walked down Whyte Road. My rage had already drained away and was replaced now by an immense feeling of fear and defeat. I had been weak again, and again one of my children had already paid for it. What would happen next? I was looking for the Appellos' apartment, but I stopped before I got to the building. What would I say? "Mr. Appello, your boy just kicked my boy in the head." Would saying that do anything? I felt that behind the darkened windows on each side of the street, the whole neighborhood was watching and laughing at me. I turned around and walked slowly back to the house. A few minutes before, I had said to my wife that we were living in a nightmare. But at this moment the poisonous and violent ill will toward us that festered under the placid surface of Whyte Road seemed less dangerous to my sons than the liberal weakness and evasiveness, the Jewish guilt and self-hatred that lay beneath my "good intentions."

A few days later the entire Reilly family went to Ireland, and shortly thereafter we moved away from Whyte Road. The night before the Reillys left, I was walking up the street and saw Reilly and Tommy coming toward me. I had no more scruples to honor and little fear, and I looked at both of them with a steady, direct contempt. But as I drew near, I was startled to see Reilly give me a nod and a slight smile. Before I could control them, my own facial muscles twitched, and as we passed each other for the last time, I imagine that we looked more like accomplices than enemies.

In the months that have since passed, I have tried to fathom the experience and to prepare myself in case I should meet a similar one in the future. Some people to whom I have described these incidents have told me that the trouble was merely "interpersonal," that our problems there stemmed from being different rather than from being Jewish, that this was not real anti-Semitism. Someone else argued that I had merely proved his point that anti-Semitism is no longer a social problem but an "existential" one. All of which is perhaps apposite but misses what I think is the main point.

The general ill will in men toward otherness, which I don't think ever decreases appreciably on Whyte Road or elsewhere, has among its traditional outlets resentment toward Jews. In the past twenty years, this outlet has closed to some extent; further the more threatening pressures of the cold war and of northern integration have deflected much of this ill-will past the Jews to the Communists and Negroes. But in the mind of Reilly and the others these outlets are not very far apart. Given enough local tension and resentment the Jewish outlet opens again, the use of it spreads, and the familiar pattern of enmity, aggression, and violence establishes itself. In this case, it was mainly restricted to the children, but there's no question in my mind that The Gang were acting out their parents' fantasies.

All of this went no further than Whyte Road, but there are many Whyte Roads in

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America and by and large they still must represent the dominant social community. Given a severe source of tension and resentment such as a depression, one wonders how the Jews, with their current wealth and economic influence, would fare. In sum, I do not think that the Jews are quite so protected as we would like to believe, or that the enlightened atmosphere of the interfaith conferences and committees is all that expressive of even current social realities.

As for myself, I worry about that tiny reflex of a smile that Reilly's greeting produced. It means that there are still confusions and cowardices in myself with which I have not yet come to terms. Some of these, no doubt, have little to do with being Jewish; on the other hand, I do not think that my indecisiveness in the situation was an uncharacteristic contemporary Jewish reaction. After all, we got no support from the five or six other Jewish families on the block. Without going into the historical issues of the current debate about the Jewish capacity for resistance, I would say that the half-way house of incomplete assimilation, which many of the recent generation have reached, can foster the dangerous kind of ambivalence and malaise that marked my own behavior.

As for other attitudes, I think that Ruth and my wife were right and the Goodmans were wrong in their respective ways of dealing with the Reillys and the neighborhood. There are some kinds of trouble that it pays to stir up. As for tactics, I think I was right to go to Father Donley and wrong not to go further: to bring in the local rabbis, the Jewish defense agencies, and whoever else could be of help. In short, "ganging-up," to use Alex Goodman's term.

However, I am no expert in these matters and have only my own experience to go on. Among all the other open questions in our life today, anti-Semitism is certainly not the most pressing one or the easiest to confront. But there it is, and sooner or later you, too, may have to take a stand.

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MARTIN MAYER

SCIENTISTS IN THE CLASSROOM*

TEN YEARS AGO, people concerned about education in the United States were particularly worried by the quality and tone of math and science instruction. Math was notoriously the dullest and most unpopular subject in the high schools, and the college-bound student was felt to have done his duty if he undertook a rudimentary introduction to algebra and a set of Euclidean book proofs. In physics, most of the time was devoted to the definition of terms, the acquisition of "laws," and the solution of set problems in static mechanics (where students were typically advised to "use their rulers" to draw parallelograms of forces and then measure the lines to arrive at answers). Chemistry and biology were essentially exercises in classification. Introductory college courses in science usually assumed no prior knowledge—and, indeed, the assumption was hopeful, for typical high-school courses often did the student more harm than good.

Today the college math and science departments are busy revising their lower-level offerings, because rapidly rising numbers of entrants already know what used to be introductory college work, and have gone on to what were once second- or even third-level problems. Mathematical topics like spherical trigonometry, matrix algebra, probability, Cartesian geometry, and calculus are to be found in large numbers of high schools, and some students will have made the acquaintance of Boolean algebra and topology. The high-school physics course is now in many schools more sophisticated than what the colleges used to offer (to sophomores, usually, because so much of the freshman year was taken up with "general education"), and increasing numbers of high schools are moving into programs in biology and chemistry which give students a grasp of the real procedures as well as the descriptive vocabulary of the field.

Ten years ago, though math and science drew a highly intelligent small group of students, most of the best prepared entrants to the more selective colleges and universities expected to specialize in the social sciences or literature; the colleges enforced for graduation a "science requirement" as well as a "language requirement" and a swimming certificate. Today the hierarchy of anticipated studies is reversed, and the most highly qualified freshmen in the best colleges wish to major in math and science.

Many explanations can be given for the increasing reach and grasp of the science programs on both school and university levels. Obviously, outside forces—the rocket to the moon, the bomb big enough to kill us all, the job market, the Russians—have made science courses more attractive to the adolescent community. Yet the

MARTIN MAYER'S *The Schools*, which appeared in 1961, has been widely acclaimed. The present essay has been adapted from Mr. Mayer's new book, *Where, When, and Why*, which will be published in May by Harper and Row.

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last decade has also been a period of rapid increase in jobs for academicians in the social sciences. Industry and the foundations have found lucrative assignments for Ph.D.'s in psychology, sociology, economics, political science, anthropology. We have lived through the age of self-consciousness, of the Beats, of tax law, of advertising and mass culture, of existentialism and foreign travel. If today we had to explain a great rise of adolescent interest in social studies, we could do it easily in terms of "outside forces." Indeed, "attitude surveys" consistently show that high-school students are more interested in the material subsumed under "social studies" than in any other material—though they find their social studies courses the least interesting stuff at school.

THIS ARGUMENT is offered strictly for purposes of illustration. If the market for instruction were wholly free, most children and adolescents would, I think, opt for an education strongly biased toward science. Conscious of rising powers and ambitious for certainty, the adolescent is necessarily drawn toward studies where procedure counts for more than information, where irrelevancy can be squeezed out by logic, where a sometimes deceptive elegance brings startling new order to the disturbing chaos of raw sense experience. Yet the fact is that until quite recently traditional methods of teaching in mathematics and science blocked all but a few students from these rewards, and the math and science courses were unpopular. The dissimilar but nonetheless real rewards that adolescents might find in applying their powers to history or the social sciences are still blocked.

Work in reforming the teaching of the sciences has been going on for seven years. The Physical Sciences Study Committee was launched a year before Sputnik, under the direction of Jerrold Zacharias of MIT, who had goaded James Killian, then president of MIT and later head of President Eisenhower's Science Advisory Committee, into asking him to do the job. The National Science Foundation supplied the first funds and eventually, over a five-year period, put more than $7 million into the project. Three key practical assumptions were explicit in the program:

1. That physics in a form wholly recognizable to working physicists could be taught on the high-school level;
2. That only the most extraordinarily talented of physicists and teachers would have the imagination and ability to create such a course;
3. That the only way to determine the viability of teaching materials was to teach them, and revise, and teach again, and remake, until finally you knew more or less what you were doing and why it worked when it worked.

From the beginning, the leaders of PSSC saw their job as extensive, complicated, and highly time-consuming. Writing a textbook would be only a fraction of the work, and not the most important fraction. Mr. Zacharias himself probably gave highest priority to the preparation of films which would show real scientists in real laboratories, explaining the real nature of important problems in physics. The films would "set the tone of the course," and they would have to be far superior to the usual educational (or educational television) material. PSSC set up its own studios and hired first-rank film talent at first-rank prices, and then worked, like the producers of A movies, on a 9–to–1 ratio, expecting to use only one of every ten feet of film actually shot.

PSSC began before the National Defense Education Act had made hundreds of millions of dollars of federal money available for high-school laboratories, and the scientists had to face up to the fact that in most schools it was not possible to perform the experiments from which students could learn what they were studying. Filmed experiments, while helpful, would not replace the experience of fiddling with the realia. Mr. Zacharias and his colleagues therefore designed a score

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of pieces of inexpensive laboratory equipment—micro-balances made from soda straws, cheap stroboscopes and the like, requiring no more than flat surfaces, electric wiring, and running water—which could be sold as a package both to ill-equipped and conventionally-equipped schools.

Though PSSC aimed to break the highly verbal patterns of instruction in physics, and insisted from the beginning that it was not the group that measured highest on IQ tests which would perform best in the new course, its creators were themselves literate men with a strong belief that people can learn from reading too. The ultimate textbook (built from four separate pamphlet-sized "units" written by different people) was to be a guide and a source of interesting problems. To accompany it, the committee chose or commissioned or wrote some seventy-five books of supplementary readings, to be published in paperback form as the Anchor Science Study Series.

Finally, PSSC recognized that no material could be teacher-proof. The physicists ran summer institutes, more of them every year, to train teachers. By the end of 1962, nearly twenty-five-hundred teachers—who come in contact with perhaps a quarter of a million students each year—had spent at least one summer working on the PSSC course.

The personnel to staff this effort were chosen mostly by Mr. Zacharias himself, and were ruthlessly sloughed off by him if their work failed to meet his standards. Using his own prestige, that of his institution, and that of his friends, he dragooned into work for the high schools one hundred of the outstanding physicists in the United States. "Writing groups" at MIT, Harvard, Cornell, Bell Labs, and Illinois (where Max Beberman's secondary school program in math had paved the way) devoted their summers and appreciable parts of their winters to thinking up ideas and angles for high-school physics.

Neither Mr. Zacharias nor his colleagues believed that they knew enough to construct an "ideal" physics course. What they were after was a very good physics course that could be taught in high schools. Physicists who were not also teachers (Mr. Zacharias himself had always taught a part of the MIT introductory course) could offer little to the PSSC effort, and the committee felt a desperate need for high-school teachers who were also physicists. A nation-wide search uncovered, with difficulty, a handful of teachers who could function in tandem with the handful of top-level university physicists working on PSSC. "Feedback" from actual teaching experience was regarded as essential. And the most nearly indispensable members of the PSSC working group were the men with a gift for seeing why students didn't learn something and how new traps could be laid—men like Philip Morrison of Cornell, David Page of Illinois, and especially the late Francis Friedman of MIT, who edited the final draft of the textbook and acted as Mr. Zacharias's scholarly conscience and balance wheel throughout the enterprise. As the summer institutes proceeded and the number of teachers who understood the material increased, PSSC was able to secure increasingly valid information on the quality of its efforts.

AT NO TIME did the scientists place any great weight on "scientific measurements" of what they were accomplishing. They did work with the Educational Testing Service designing a test to assure that PSSC students would not be penalized in the bureaucratic world of college admissions and to insure themselves against overconfidence about what they were achieving. But descriptive reports from those who were teaching and learning the material weighed much more heavily than test results when the committee sat down to analyze how it was doing. The committee is in fact still analyzing and revising. The question of quality has always been first in the physicists' minds; as ac-

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complished men in a technical field, they have never doubted their ability to recognize quality when they see it.

PSSC was lavishly financed, and could pay the people who worked on it more than they would receive from their universities for equivalent time—though still substantially less than they could get from private industry for consulting work. What has kept the program going for more than six years, however, is neither the pay nor the sense of the importance of the job, but the fascination that masters of a discipline feel when they seriously undertake the intellectual exercise of looking at their field afresh, through the eyes of a beginner. Normal intellectual work occurs within a framework of conventions so long accepted and so casually employed that the scholar forgets not only the means of their acquisition but also their ultimate significance. Looking at physics as an intelligent adolescent sees it, the physicists found much that was interesting, and a little that was important, with reference to their own work. Significantly, several of the physicists, led by Francis Friedman, moved down to work in the elementary school once the superstructure was up and the scaffolding removed in the high-school courses.

Nobody in physics would argue that the PSSC course is the only, or even necessarily the best way to teach the subject. Mr. Zacharias himself never wished to prepare a physics course: in his original scheme, he wanted a full-size science program which would break down what he regarded as artificial barriers between physics and chemistry and eventually between both and biology. This procedure proved impractical in early meetings, and was regretfully dropped, but is is now being revived by the National Science Foundation under the cryptic label "Phase 2." NSF, with the encouragement of Mr. Zacharias, will also support another physics course, aimed at the engineering-minded rather than the science-minded in the adolescent community.

Taking PSSC as a point of reference (sometimes for purposes of disagreement) and taking financial and adminstrative assistance from the National Science Foundation, the mathematicians, chemists, and biologists set to work in committees to reform instruction in their own disciplines on the secondary level. A unified study committe of biologists has produced three separate high-school courses; two committees of chemists have produced a course each; and several groups of mathematicians have developed new approaches to the six years of secondary-school math. At present no fewer than five groups under the leadership of university mathematicians are working on materials for elementary-school math, a subject they have already made far more extensive than mere arithmetic. All these groups have involved themselves in actual teaching to varying degrees—but all have assumed that the essence of the job was finding ways to teach the subject, not merely determining (or justifying) the goals of instruction.

It has been delightful in these dry years to watch the mathematicians and scientists, largely ignorant of the history and theory of education, develop painfully and piece by piece an educational philosophy superficially similar to that of the early progressives at the turn of the century. Education, they argued, had to be active; an ounce of discovery was worth a pound of rote; the physics course was not preparation for physics, it was physics itself. Talk is cheap; the ability to handle definitions does not necessarily imply the ability to perform. What the child learns is not necessarily the thing you think you are teaching. The energy in the classroom is the energy of the assembled students, and the function of teaching is to release this energy in productive channels, not to impart wisdom. The mathematicians and scientists found that they learned from teaching, that aiming the program at the child did not necessarily water down its

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content but might in fact distill its essence from conventional irrelevancies. Whatever else the math and science reform movements accomplished, they unquestionably gave a number of highly intelligent and powerful men a view of education far more sophisticated than the view held by any other group of similar intelligence and power since the early years of this century.

YET THE WORK done by the mathematicians and scientists has rested on theoretical foundations in part original with them, and never fully stated, though Jerome Bruner touched interestingly upon the matter in his book, *The Process of Education*. If the math and science movements are to be taken as models for work in other disciplines, these theoretical foundations must be understood, and their practical implications realized, by the people who are to make the attempts. The theory can be reduced to two assumptions, an argument, and a conclusion:

First Assumption: The real world is really there. Like the scientist-philosophers (Russell, Whitehead, Jeans, etc.) whose writings spread through the general intellectual community during the heyday of progressivism, the new scientist-educators have a cold answer to questions of epistemology. Different people see the same meter readings, and experiments are duplicable. An optical illusion is demonstrably an illusion. If reality is asked a good question, over and over again, it will give the same answer, within a statistically predictable range, over and over again; where the answer varies unpredictably, the question is no good. All real disagreements can be empirically resolved, eventually—though as yet, the scientists insist, we know very little.

Second Assumption: On some basic operational level, all human learning (including perception) involves the same process. Every learning theory is of course founded on this assumption; indeed, behaviorist theories tend to assume that human and animal learning are identical. The scientists, however, are natural Gestalt psychologists, because so much of what is most interesting in the history of a science seems to have occurred by intuitional jump rather than by trial and error. The primary question to them is the organization of raw experience by the learner (or by the discoverer, who is, of course, merely the first learner).

Argument: Now, if all learning follows the same process, and the real world is really there, every wholly naive human intelligence (a theoretical construct impossible in reality) would organize each wholly new experience in the same way. In less elaborate language, there *is* such a thing as common sense; given no background or identical backgrounds, the commonality of mankind would draw from the same experiences the same beliefs about reality. These isotropic beliefs, however, tend to be mistaken: reality is far more complicated than common sense will say it is. To handle reality, mankind has developed scholastic disciplines, which depart, often radically, from common sense. Education, whenever it is more than initiation into the myths and rituals of the tribe, is the induction of the learner into these disciplines. Bruner is insistent on this point, demanding that all education reflect "the structure of the discipline."

From this argument there flows the conclusion: The difficulties of learning are inherent in the material to be learned. If the generality of mankind finds difficulty in mastering an experimentally verified explanation of reality—and human learning is essentially the same for all individuals, and the real world is really there—it can only be because raw experience misleads common sense. Teaching, then, is the reorganizing of raw experience in such a way that the human mind will discover the usable patterns of thought called disciplines rather than the hodgepodge of irrelevancies called common sense.

Given the theoretical schema, the scien-

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tist can reduce the problem of improving education to two manageable parts:

1. He can construct pedagogic models (systematic reorganizations of experience, such as ripple tanks for wave motion in physics), from which learners will by normal processes induce the usable discipline. This task, it will be observed, is wholly empirical; as long as the scientist assumes that all human learning occurs the same way, he does not need to know how it occurs. The value of the pedagogic models he develops can be experimentally determined: students either do or do not tend to induce the discipline from the model. Much the same attitude, by the way, lies behind programmed instruction, which accounts for the *Angst* about programming felt by the mathematicians and scientists, who do not get along very well with Skinnerian psychologists but feel that there simply must be something here which they can use.

2. The scientist can train teachers specifically to work with these models. Teachers will still, of course, require considerable background in the discipline; otherwise they will not understand the value of the models and they will introduce common-sense material which appears to be, but in fact is not, relevant to the models. The better educated the teacher is, the more easily he will handle the model. But the training of teachers, beyond education, must be based, as it has not been, on the materials they will take with them into the classroom.

Fighting the flood of this argument, educators will often clutch on to Dewey's division of educational efforts as either "logical" (directed toward the discipline) or "psychological" (directed toward the child). But the strength of the scientists' approach is that it is both logical and psychological. Though it seeks as an end result the logic of the discipline, it does not attempt (as the Herbartians and, for that matter, the progressives sometimes did) the direct teaching of the logic. Instead, it seeks to match experiences with the psychology of learning in such a way that the logic will emerge. Indeed, the best of the scientists have learned from their teaching that their own view of the clearest and simplest presentation of an idea is often misleading—that if they are to teach successfully, they must somehow find out what the idea means to someone who never ran into it before.

BUT WITHIN the other disciplines, able men, some of whom have actually thought about education, feel queasy at the prospect of adopting the scientists' model as a pattern for reform movements in history and the social sciences. What seems to be bothering them can be sketched in the framework of the scientists' theory:

To the scientists' first assumption, that the real world is really there, the historians and even some of the social scientists nervously reply that in their terms reality is hard to define. When one must deal with words and deeds (let alone music and art) rather than with meter readings and mathematical symbols, reality seems to be what can be found in the mind of the beholder. Asked the same good question, reality will give different answers from culture to culture and from time to time. One man's fish, as the late Joe Palmer once pointed out, is another man's *poisson*.

To the scientists' second assumption, that all learning involves the same process on some operational level, most historians and social scientists reply, in effect, "Who cares?" They believe that prior learnings (acquired ways of viewing experience, existing "phase assemblies" in the brain, to use D.O. Hebb's terminology) will be more important than this invisibly distant process in determining what the individual sees when he looks at the world—and prior learnings vary greatly from person to person, even at an early age. Every teacher has had the experience of presenting the same material the same way with two different sets of results. As

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teachers, of course, the scientists know this problem. Some of them will argue that if the child is caught young enough (in elementary school) the disparity among prior learnings can be controlled; some will contend that the ideal pedagogic model can cut across prior learnings and even across great differences in individual ability and classroom psychology; some will accept the difficulty but insist that teaching must deal with only a finite and probably small number of erroneous prior learnings, and a manageable number of pedagogic models will turn the trick. Social scientists, accustomed to the nasty habits of unknown variables, trapped every so often by elements in their disciplines which turn out to be *inferior* to common sense, fear that the differences introduced by prior learnings will be too various and too great to be controlled by straightforward analysis of the contact between students and material.

If the real world exists at least in part in the mind of the beholder, and human intelligence reacts to experience largely on the basis of varying prior learnings, then the difficulties of learning are largely inherent in the individual rather than in the material to be learned.

But from this argument there follows, unfortunately, nothing to do. The teacher in the classroom cannot look to the masters of a discipline to help him; he is stuck with his intuition and with the ludicrous guidance given by long, pompous, quasi-religious statements of the "goals of instruction."

THE DICHOTOMY is, of course, oversimplified and overstated. The participants in the dialogue are brought together by the fact that the scientists have accomplished something in the schools, and the other scholars would like to accomplish something, too. The problems the two groups face are enough alike in important aspects so that similar procedures may make sense, despite divergent theories.

Perhaps the most serious difficulty in any academic instruction, scientific or otherwise, is to get down below the verbiage (which most children can memorize, if prodded hard enough) to the processes which the words symbolize. Getting at the reality of the conservation of matter or the development of vertebrates or the periodic tables may not be, as a teaching matter, all that different from getting at the phenomena behind Progressivism or Marginal Analysis or the Protestant Ethic —or, for that matter, the language behind the grammar. To give the word and then the example, which was the customary procedure in science instruction before the scientists came into the classrooms, and is still the customary procedure in the social studies, is known to be a highly ineffective way to teach, and it survives only because of the severe shortage of pedagogic models from which children can induce for themselves the idea behind the word.

If only because reality itself is blurred, and because irrelevancy (not to mention inaccuracy) constantly intrudes from the pervasive common sense of the culture, the construction of pedagogic models in the social studies will be far more difficult than it is in science. But it has, after all, been done—in the Bible, by Plato and Aristotle, by Hobbes and Locke and Hume, by Adam Smith and Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. The power of Aristotle's thought over two millennia derived largely from the excellence of his pedagogic models. Beard's thesis on the makers of the American Constitution still looms large in the schools, though historians no longer credit it, because it serves so well as a pedagogic model. Books like David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* dominate introductory courses, to the distaste of most sociologists and anthropologists, because, to hammer on the ugly phrase, they work so well as pedagogic models.

How far others can follow the mathematicians and scientists in adopting an inductive approach is still an open question.

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Induction, or "heuristic," as the mathematicians and scientists practice it, is a process of successive approximation. A child need not be told that his answers are right or wrong, because he can feed them back into the problem himself, see how they work out, and hunt around for the reasons for error. The scientists, moreover, make heavy use of analogy, which is more complicated in its effects when the subject under consideration is less simple.

BY APPROACHING their subject through the disciplines, by breaking reality into pieces with defined parameters, social studies teachers can undoubtedly follow a far more inductive approach than they do today. Some are already trying it. Richard McCann of Meadowbrook Junior High in Newton, Mass., defines teaching as "a game of trying to structure the situation so students will feel they are coming out with their own conclusions." But only people who are truly learned in the disciplines to be taught are likely to come up with those uniquely organized slices of reality that allow the student to feed back his own answers. Most teachers are no better equipped to make such slices for themselves than they are to invent original experiments for students to try out in the labs.

Even in the hands of the most skilled math and science teachers, induction does not work equally well with all children in all classrooms. Less intelligent children, almost by definition, handle induction less well—though the method quickly reveals that children who do poorly in the usual learn-and-apply-the-formula pattern are not necessarily the less intelligent. Most classrooms can be made to buzz with excitement in the hands of, say, a David Page of the University of Illinois or a Robert Davis of Webster College in St. Louis, the two most spectacularly skilled reformers of elementary arithmetic instruction, but they have failures too, for reasons they cannot always locate. It is not impossible that differences in individual ability and prior learnings, and differences in the psychology of the class as a whole, will show up even more strongly in the more value-laden areas of the social studies. Still, you never know till you try.

And the trial will be made, probably on a fairly large scale, with the scientists helping. Mr. Zacharias's Educational Services, Inc., which owns and operates PSSC, has already secured grants from the Ford Foundation to start a curriculum reform movement in "the social sciences and the humanities." The philosopher Frederick Burkhardt, head of the American Council of Learned Societies, and the historian Elting Morrison are sharing with Mr. Zacharias the privileges and rigors of planning a program. The U.S. Office of Education will presently launch its own reform movement (under the name Project Social Studies), a fact that would be scarcely worth mentioning except that the direction of this sort of program at the Office has passed into the hands of Fritz Ianni, a capable young anthropologist who admires and understands what the scientists have done. Men of considerable ability from the universities—the anthropologist Douglas Oliver, the sociologist George Homans, the social psychologist Ronald Lippitt, the economist Lawrence Senesh, the political scientist Franklin Patterson—are already involved in serious attempts to improve school instruction in their fields.

Within a few years, we should know whether or not the scientists' model is applicable to instruction at large or only to their own uncluttered subjects. At worst, the result of trying will be a handful of materials and teaching approaches far more intelligent and sophisticated than anything to be found in the schools today.

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DEIRDRE LEVINSON

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF A CHIEF RABBI

"WHEN she smiles at me," Ralph said, "I get a pain here." He pressed his palm tenderly against his blue woollen chest.

"Jewish girl?" his mother asked, but as both an interrogation offering no choice of answer, or a purely social formula to which there could be only one reply.

"What a question," said Ralph, "you know everyone at our school's Jewish."

"You said Mrs. Hanna was Jewish that time I asked you, and she isn't," his mother said, but as a point of argument, not reproof.

"She's a teacher. How was I to know?" said Ralph.

"Jewish people aren't black," his mother said, "not as black as Mrs. Hanna, anyway. Is this girl the one who puts your coat on and does your shoes up for you?"

"Sometimes," said Ralph.

He was unbearably dilatory in his personal toilet. It was as if his socks and pants, though no objects of meditation in themselves, were the keys to vast halls of reflection. On his socks, as it were, Ralph told his beads. When, that summer, he had gone off confidently to camp for a fortnight, his parents in fear and hope awaited the breaking or making of their son, both proved baseless by his first letter. "I have made a friend," Ralph wrote, "called Emmanuel Kaner. He is a very convenient boy."

"He must be the one who washes and dresses him," his father said.

Morning palaver broke with the full seven-thirty light over 122 Bolsover Road, London, E. 15., where Ralph lived directly opposite the Leytonstone and Woodford synagogue, conveniently situated for his father, who presided there, and the intending Chief Rabbi, to which calling Ralph had early dedicated himself. Regular communiqués of the time were delivered at three-minute intervals for forty-five minutes as a rule. Then his mother would go up, threats swelling stair by stair, till the climax was reached in Ralph's bedroom, the intolerable tension broke, and a roaring filled the house, all described by his sister Norma, with the casual stunning accuracy which is the vital characteristic of the true impressionist, as the *sordidness* of Ralph getting up in the morning.

"Still in your pyjamas, you lump!" the dreadful dialogue began.

Caught, pants in hand, eyes fixed to an invisible spot through the wall, all sight turned inward, "Hush," he would murmur desperately, "I'm in the middle of a poem."

"I'll poem you!" his mother employed a variant of her ancestors' substitution of literature for lethal weapons. "When Judith was *three*," she drew out of her rich compendium of virtuous examples from Ralph's next-of-kin, her eldest

DEIRDRE LEVINSON is a young English writer who has spent considerable time in South Africa and now lives in London. The present story marks Miss Levinson's first appearance in print.

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daughter, the first of the four aces up her sleeve by which means Ralph lived in the childhood of his sisters, "she could dress herself from head to foot in five minutes. Not a button undone. Not a shoe-lace untied." She pulled his pants up over his shining delicate rump. Ralph cooperated, but passively. "I looked at your sums last night," she accused the headless torso crowned with a flannel shirt-collar, "15.4 multiplied by 4.2. How can the answer *possibly* be 3 point anything?"

"That's what *I* want to know!" Outraged justice emerged into the daylight.

"When Dinah was *seven*," she produced her second model, "you've seen her sum-book, how neat it is, scarcely any sums wrong."

"Only two," Ralph said with unstinting admiration, "on the last page but one." He turned to the staircase.

"Hands," his mother said. She scrubbed them at the sink. "Face. When Pauline was *six*—what a manager she was! Bathed herself from head to foot."

"And Norma," Ralph marveled with her. He was content to applaud such precocity. He would not compete. He went downstairs to his cornflakes and the football results and murders in the morning paper.

"That man's done it again, Dad," he said.

"Tottenham Hotspurs' center forward?" It was a bizarre phrase in the mouth of Ralph's father, too English, too mundane, for that (though naturalized thirty years past) interminably alien, incontrovertibly spiritual and otherly British citizen.

"I mean that man who cut the girl's head off in Hounslow," his eyes held his father's. "He's done it again, in Epping."

"Why do you think every murderer's interested in you?" his father comforted him. "There are plenty of other people."

"O, *Dad*," Ralph said. Words failed him. But a perceptible downward straining at the corners of his mouth betrayed a grudging propensity to laughter.

"You're off school straight after lunch today, aren't you?" his mother said. "Do me a favor and take the washing to the laundromat. It's in the laundry basket. I'll be home by the time you get back."

"Time," his father said, and prepared to accompany him down the street and across the main road, which was unnecessary now, but his father loved to do it.

He occupied the deepest level of his parents' communication with one another. Their conversation was laconic, often wordless. They referred to their son by the pronoun only. There was no other he.

"I've got an appointment with his headmistress this morning," his mother said, but in Yiddish, which infused it with a richness and depth and such intimacy that it was as if she were talking to herself. "He must get more help with his sums."

"He's not stupid," his father said carefully. But he meant: the boy is deep, meditative, highly aware, full of a rarer intelligence.

"He knows nothing about sums," his mother said.

"Don't let him see you," said his father.

"Would I let him see me?" his mother's face duplicated the exasperated martyrdom worn by her son earlier that morning.

She sat in the office of Mrs. Leibowitz, who detested Jewish parents in particular, since these she knew most intimately, and it was a rare one whose child did not, by signs carelessly undetected by her, subtly manifest his genius. "He's slow," Ralph's headmistress said, "and rather dull. Brilliant in Hebrew, of course."

"If he's brilliant in Hebrew, he's not dull," his mother said. "He wasn't *born* with his Hebrew, you know, he learnt it."

"His father taught him, of course," Mrs. Leibowitz smilingly discounted Ralph's talent. "He's a proper little rabbi," she said, which in Ralph's father's boyhood would have been praise indeed; but Mrs. Leibowitz in England 1960 tacitly intimated contempt.

"If he could get some *personal* attention in arithmetic, I think he'd do better,"

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Ralph's mother made her appeal in the irresistibly persuasive voice she had practiced off and on, over a period of thirty years, to get one or another of her five children to eat.

"I'll speak to his teacher," Mrs. Leibowitz said. Then shockingly she called her secretary to fetch Ralph.

"No, *please,*" Ralph's mother was aghast. "I told you he doesn't know I'm here."

"It won't do him any harm," Mrs. Leibowitz said.

Ralph came. He stopped short when he saw his mother, and his face was helplessly the victim of his shocked blood which drained away in a moment, then hurled itself mercilessly into his cheeks and remained there. "Kiss your mother," Mrs. Leibowitz said. Ralph stood stock-still, his eyes frozen in the boiling whirlpool of his face. "Kiss your mother," Mrs. Leibowitz repeated, sharp this time. Ralph couldn't move.

"We don't do that in our family," said his mother, forced to reduce to one paltry sentence a long and complex family history.

"Don't kiss?" said Mrs. Leibowitz. "Nonsense. Kiss your mother at once."

"No," his mother said for him, "we don't need to demonstrate affection in our family."

"How strange," said Mrs. Leibowitz. "Very well, Ralph, you may go." He turned slowly, and his mother, dwelling miserably on that scarlet wing-eared face and the pathos of his humiliated, undefended blue and gray back, was amply punished for her errand.

At two o'clock Ralph let himself into the house, stood in the center of the living room, regarded himself in the glass, hissed quietly, "No, Mrs. Leibowitz, no, no, no" at his reflection. Then he half-closed his eyes, dropped the corners of his mouth, inflated his chest. Mrs. Shapiro interrogating his sister Norma. "Why you not married, heh, a nice Jewish girl like you?" His eyes narrowed further, he nodded several times gently, "I understand. You haddit a disappointlement." Then he read the football results again, intoned a portion of the Pentateuch he knew by heart, walked three times round the room, slowly, right hand outstretched, a slight social smile on his mouth, bowing a little at each step, the Chief Rabbi wishing his brethren Sabbath joy. After which, without further delay, he took the laundry basket and went on his way, but traveling over the doorstep at the speed of light, he moved now into a crowd cheering Leyton Orient into the first division.

He did not, as a shallower lover of the game might have done, make skillful passes with his feet, nor did he flick his head with superb confidence to send the ball in a glorious arc to the touchline, as he pushed the family washing down the street. He meditated with a purer love, as a spectator merely, which characteristic of disinterestedness he had directly and uniquely of all the children of that household inherited from his father who, least *homo ludens* of all men on earth, diligently pursued the study of the game for the pleasure of his son.

Ralph maneuvered the basket round the corner. From the back you noticed most his gait, which was erratic, the left hip raised a little higher than the right, the trunk perched on the long slim legs suggesting a person walking rapidly, and with the careless ease of long habit, on stilts, a barely perceptible but absolutely characteristic limp from breaking his thigh twice in three months, seven years earlier in his first walking year. But if you were approaching him face to face you would be struck most forcibly not by the pebble-thick spectacles that cruelly concealed the honey-brown velvet of his eyes, or the square preoccupied forehead, or the clipped rough mealie-brown hair that would have been a cascade of shining ringlets if his father's word had been obeyed and his mother had not introduced him to a barber six years back and once a

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month ever since; or the glow and curve of his cheeks which is the perquisite of all the young of the species but of Ralph more so; or the long nose that crowded his face with his big mouth which was soft, being young, but witness too to the accumulated sorrows of nine years of living; you would be impressed beyond the pattern of all this by the extraordinary gentleness with which it had been assembled and indelibly autographed.

As he proceeded to the main road, through the window of the garage of the third house on the left, he saw the woman hanging. He turned the basket round sharply and advanced at great speed in pursuit of duty. The key wasn't under the loose edge of the doorstep. He beat on the door. His father, who was saying grace after meals, which is a four-minute job at the shortest, answered the door, still blessing the Bread-Giver. "Dad," Ralph said grimly, "there's a woman hanging in the garage at 5 Cormer Street," and waited, first things first, till his father reached the amen.

"You're always seeing things," his father indicted him. And always have, he might have added, in view of Ralph's recurrent assertion that his earliest memory was the painful look on his mother's face as he was born. But he didn't insult his son with a smile.

"Dad, I tell you—" Ralph's voice rose, "O what shall I do? She's hanging there. She might be *dead,* Dad."

His father resisted a persistent temptation to press his son's head between his hands. He called him in self-defense an unflattering name in Yiddish as he put on his overcoat. "I have to go out now," he said. "Go and get that washing done. Ma wants to iron this evening."

"O Dad," the mild downy forehead was an intricate network of wrinkles. "All right then," he was resolved, "I'll go and get Norma."

"She's teaching now," his father said, "you can't interrupt her for nonsense."

"The woman might be *dead,*" Ralph repeated, and though this kind of dying, like jokes about corpses, was deeply divided from his grief at the notion of that ultimate silence which terribly awaited him and his, he did not hesitate to lend it with his voice the identical sorrow with which for the past four years he had regularly alarmed his mother, and in desperate defense against the death of whom, since fifty too nearly approaches the three score and ten allotted by the Scriptures, he had permanently invested her with the age of forty-nine. It was in deference to this that his mother, long since purged of all vanity of her own person, though she lied about the ages of her two unmarried daughters with a consistency and energy for which she received no gratitude, was eternally forty-nine for her son.

RALPH turned the laundry basket toward the kindergarten where the youngest and favorite of his four sisters dragooned, to Ralph's delight, twenty midgets fresh from the incubator. They were in the midst of recitation. Ralph generally rejoiced in their smallness and enchanting ineptitude, and though there was sterner business afoot now, he was not, for all that, as he crossed the room to confer with his sister, oblivious of how tall and how senior he must appear to the thirty-inch disciples, nor did he fail in a silent acknowledgment of the responsibility this demanded of him.

"A hanging woman!" his sister's utterly sincere horror warmed him. She got up and directed her forefinger at the adjoining room which faced her twenty dwarfs. "Anyone, Michael Levine, Peter Simonovitz, Norman Klein, Perry Miller, who causes any disturbance, who fights, who shouts, who brings disgrace on this school while I'm out for ten minutes, will be reported to me by Mrs. Shapiro in there. What I will do then will be more horrible than anyone here can imagine." Ralph, assimilating the forty hypnotized eyes and the odor of sanctity that filled the room, suppressed a complex urge to grin.

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The two of them walked briskly out of the playground. "All I'm saying, Ralph," his sister put some pressure on his elbow, "is that if this is a joke, you will not even live to repent it," a warning born of long experience of Ralph's jokes which may be divided roughly into three categories. The first might be exemplified by the occasion on which he swallowed his sister's contact lenses, thinking, he said, they were crystallized fruits; and it wasn't until she said, "Forty guineas' worth of crystallized fruits, we're going to Doctor Horwitz for an emetic," and actually got him into the doctor's waiting-room, that he produced them from his blazer-pocket with huge if short-lived mirth. The second category was the funny story, regarding which his mother, whose intermittent patience with her last-born astonished Ralph's sisters, all of whom remembered a childhood fraught with domestic violence, said of her only son: "He is a good boy, a *kind* boy, and without him what your father would do I don't know, for he is the greatest joy of his life"—meaning her own, though it was nonetheless true—"he is not shallow or mean: he is a pleasure to look at and not stupid; he is good company and very sweet-natured and dependable; but when he tells a joke, I could. . . ," she closed her eyes, her face registered anguish no less profound for all that it was simple and wordless, her voice fell to a whisper, "pass out from sheer boredom." The third category contained what Ralph called "Anecdotes from Rabbinic Times," and some short conversation pieces which he recounted expressionlessly, without accompanying gestures or vocal inflections, so that years afterward his family remembered most clearly not the joke but the flat colorless voice he told it in. "There was this woman, you see, and her husband died in Shul, and all the men were terrified of telling her because they thought she might die of shock. So the Rabbi said, 'All right, I will then. I'll break it gently.' So he went to her house and knocked on the window, and she said, 'Who's there?' So the Rabbi said, 'It's me, the Rabbi, Widow Cohen.' So she said, 'I'm Mrs. Cohen, not Widow Cohen.' So the Rabbi said, 'Well you are now.' "

"O Norma," Ralph said, "it's no joke. *Murder* isn't a joke."

When they got there the body was gone. "Somebody's cut her down," said Ralph. His sister examined his face. It was unarguably the face of one who has seen a woman hanging in a garage and returns with help to find the body gone. If it had been any other of his four sisters standing there with their brother and the laundry basket, Ralph's day would have been less memorable. The eldest would have explained with care that whereas what is seen by the sensory eye can be related immediately to the real world, what the eye of the imagination, the visionary eye, beholds, has no practical framework of reference. His second sister would have divined that the victim was certainly a witch anyway, a constant source of misery to her innocent husband and children, full of evil and incurable malice. His third sister would have said, "She was doubtless standing on a table knocking a *nail* in the garage-roof." But Norma knew the world, knew, had always known—with the special knowledge that is so central to any given person's apprehension of the world that it seems congenital—that a murderer was not exceptional among men. She knocked at the door. There was no answer and no sound within. They turned the laundry basket homeward and telephoned the police. Two uniformed men arrived promptly. Ralph, with decent pride, boarded the police car with Norma, and gave succinct directions. The police knocked. There was no reply. The people next door came out, said their neighbor was on holiday, that they were keeping an eye on the house, and with evident contempt but no hesitation briefly supplied further dull information. The police dropped Norma off at the kindergarten, drove Ralph home and thanked him.

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His mother came in at five o'clock with a carefully prepared explanation and covert apology for the disaster of the morning. The house was quiet. Ralph was not in the kitchen nor the living room. The moment she heard the sound of muffled weeping she saw him through the window, his back toward her, his head bent, sitting among the packing cases in the lean-to. She called him with synthetic brightness. He came into the kitchen at once, his forefinger wedged between the pages of a book in his right hand, but his mother's eyes were only on his damp face.

"What's the matter?" she asked painfully.

"Lancelot. And Guinevere," Ralph moaned quietly. "I wish people wouldn't die, Ma." He took out the crying-rag he kept permanently at the unbearable page and mopped his eyes; then he replaced the rag and balanced the book on his head.

"I don't know why you go on upsetting yourself with that," his mother hid her relief. Then she said timidly, "What sort of day did you have at school?"

"O Ma," said Ralph, "that Mrs. Leibowitz! Thanks ever so much for not kissing me." Then he said, "You should have been home an hour ago. I thought you'd been run over."

In his diary that evening he wrote: "Forecast for Arsenal *vs.* Leyton Orient tomorrow. Leyton Orient 3 Arsenal 1. Went to laundromat. Saw dead woman. Called police. Saw Mark Arieh with his dog. He ran after us. Mark said he thought I had been kidnapped. He was a bit surprised to see me in a police car. That was my day."

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JOHN MANDER

INDIA'S CRISIS: A DIARY

New Delhi, November 8, 1962.

"KRISHNA MENON dismissed," ran the London headlines as we were leaving England, "India on the move." That was a week ago. Nehru had made his great, brave confession: "We have been living in a dream-world. India has been out of touch with reality. . . . Nehru's face on television: still gentle, but hurt and angry, sad and contemptuous, a Brahmin bewildered at the ways of barbarians. "It may be a turning point in the history of Asia." Well, we shall see.

At Palam Airport, minor rumors of war. "No photographs, please." Indian air force jets in the air, on the runway. Newly delivered? Probably not. The round-the-clock U.S. arms airlift flies in to Calcutta (later, we hear Indian editors have been advised not to print photographs: nominally for security reasons, but in fact to keep the Russian Bear docile and non-alignment afloat).

Rao, our host, picks us up in his Ford Consul. Rao is a journalist on a big Indian daily. Lean, emphatic, voluble, he says all is to be well now Menon's gone. Menon has been the *bête noire* of the anti-neutralist faction. Acharya Kripalani, once president of Nehru's Congress party, now Nehru's opponent, ran against Menon in North Bombay only ten months before—and was soundly defeated. Yet Rao assures us that Menon never enjoyed popular support. A paradox? I think not: when Bombay voted for him, it was voting not for Menon but for Nehru, its beloved *Panditji.*

All talk in India—our drive into Delhi is no exception—begins and ends with Panditji. Political argument is devious but circular: Panditji proposes, Panditji disposes. Thus, our host. "But wasn't Panditji responsible too?" we ask. "For the Bandung neutralist euphoria, for the writing-off of Tibet, for the neglect of the army?" At once, we encounter a block. No, all is explained by the spell Menon put on his master. Nehru always needed a *guru*—first his father, then Gandhi. Menon took over the role. The man is a devil, a Rasputin. We are skeptical: Menon is nobody's favorite, but this Rasputin-Menon is too bad to be true.

Are we not convinced? We are taken to a well-known lawyer the same evening, to be convinced. Our lawyer friend claims he has evidence that Menon is a crypto-Communist. He is said to have been a Party member in the 30's during his long residence in London. Our friend has evidence of financial machinations, of funds supplied to leftist publications. At the Defense Ministry it was a question, he thinks, not of neglect, but of sabotage. "Take the case of General T....." "But surely," we protest, "if Menon were a saboteur, the Russians wouldn't show him such open favor." Fellow-traveler or secret agent; a man may

JOHN MANDER, a former member of the editorial staff of the *New Statesman* in London, is the author of *The Writer and Commitment.* His article, "Little England," appeared in our February issue.

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be the one or the other, but the craft is different. No, no, there is evidence, hard evidence: the man's a devil, he has corrupted Panditji. He ought to be shot.

The argument pursues us around India. The leftists, Menon's allies, are taking a new line. Menon is the willing scapegoat; he has sacrificed himself for the nation. If he spent too little on armaments, if he feared Pakistan more than China, if his ordnance factories—the joke of the season, this—have been busy turning out coffee percolators . . . "Well, that was Panditji's doing, wasn't it?" By resigning, Menon is shielding Panditji from his newly emboldened critics. Whatever its motives, this line of argument strikes one as plausible. Kripalani, Menon's sworn enemy, agrees: "Menon Nehru's Rasputin? What nonsense! He was Panditji's instrument. The one's as responsible as the other."

BUT IF Panditji was wrong, who was right? Where is the opposition? Kripalani, certainly. But Kripalani has paid the price of opposition in Nehru's India: political oblivion. A paradox, again, of Panditji's *Raj*. Nehru is a democrat in theory, an autocrat in practice. Parliamentary forms are preserved—Nehru is punctilious about question time, about protocol, about the rights of minorities. Yet, in fifteen years of formal democracy, Nehru's *Raj* has broken all its opponents. His old Congress colleagues—Rajagopalachari, M. R. Masani, Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta—are active in politics, in the rightist Swatrantra party, and in the anti-Communist *Praja* Socialist party. But are they an opposition? The people have made a god of Panditji; and their god must be strong and jealous—Hindus are not the natural polytheists Westerners (wrongly, one is assured) take them to be. If Panditji has no rivals, it's the people's choice. Says Kripalani: "Public opinion? Nonsense! Panditji's a tribal chieftain."

Yet there has been dissent; it has only not made itself heard. This is true even inside the government. We visit Morarji Desai, once Chief Minister in Bombay, now Finance Minister. It's eight in the morning; Morarji—as everybody calls him—has risen at five, performed complex Hindu ablutions, done an hour's spinning. A large, unhumorous man, with a reputation for religious and financial orthodoxy. Respected, not popular. A fanatic, according to some. Among idealists, his supporters declare him the one man with his feet on the ground. What will Morarji say?

Our talk is not off the record; yet Morarji's frankness owes a little, one can't but feel, to the mood of the crisis. "Fellow-wanderers, I call 'em . . . soft-headed, you know," says Morarji, miming the appropriate gesture. Not Panditji, of course, but still those who thought like him, who shouted *"Hindi-Chini bhai bhai"* ("Indians and Chinese are brothers") when fraternization was still fashionable. "Of course, I was always against that, you know," says Morarji. He's not being indiscreet; his views have always been known. He is now for serious rearmament, no nonsense about aid from "the socialist camp." He does not believe that the MIG's Russia has promised to send India will ever arrive; if they do, they will be no more than a gesture. There is no doubt where Morarji stands. After much glib Delhi talk, his gloom is infectious.

Yet it is all very odd. Indiscreet to ask why, if he was against the appeasement of China, Morarji never thought of resigning his post in the government. Obviously, he never did. But why? Morarji is a resolute, plain-spoken character. He is of the Gandhian Old Guard. He has a strong following inside the Congress party.

There's a hint of why he never spoke up, perhaps, in some other comments of Morarji's. I ask about currency restrictions: students—indeed most people—find it hard to travel. There seems to be less contact—I tell him our impressions—between India and the West now than before Independence. The old links from the days of the Independence struggle—links with the English Left of the 30's, through the Left Book Club and the *New Statesman*—have been weakened. In the 70's M.I.T. may be doing for India what the London School of Economics, under Harold Laski, used to do in the 30's. But it's a slow process. America is still somewhat patronized; students still prefer Oxford and Cambridge, if they're given the choice.

Morarji is unsympathetic. His experience is different: they go abroad, these students, and what do they find? A higher standard

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of living than anything in India. They get dissatisfied. Either they stay and are lost to India; or they come back, complaining about discrimination. Once home, they're doubly dissatisfied. They despise India's backwardness, and what colleagues call their arrogance makes it harder for them to conform. As Morarji tells it, the story is sad indeed.

Of course, to a great extent, Morarji is right. What he says fits in with what we've seen of Indians returned from abroad. Anti-Western sentiment is rare among the stay-at-homes, common among those who've lived in the West. Morarji is the one case, Krishna Menon the other.

Morarji's solution is breathtaking: it is better not to go. It all costs the Exchequer valuable rupees; and the results are incommensurate, are even counter-productive. "After all," says Morarji, "I was never abroad myself till 1958."

It's a remark of some interest. They laugh at Morarji, of course, for his hand-spinning and his zeal for prohibition. But in Morarji one grasps what Gandhi did for India. Gandhi created a new kind of leader, rooted in popular Hinduism, tempered by long imprisonment, self-confident as Indians had not been for generations. It was a necessary thing; but Gandhi's victory cost a certain narrowing. Nehru alone was exempt. That is why he was India's only possible Prime Minister; only Nehru knew about foreign affairs.

It's also why Morarji kept his mouth shut all these years. Morarji's instincts—one can't but think—were much sounder than Nehru's. But no one in the Congress party had the self-confidence to stand up to Panditji. It is India's old trouble in finding a "synthesis." Panditji, of course, is a living synthesis—three parts Cambridge to one part Hindu. But Gandhism, in one aspect at least, was atavistic, a rejection of synthesis. "For East is East, and West is West. . . ." Morarji would not disagree.

So that was Delhi, in the third week of the second round of the Great Game. (The Great Game is what Kipling called it: in *Kim* it was played against the Czar.) The first round was 1959, the year Tibet fell and Nehru had to acknowledge China's annexation of Indian territory in Kashmir's mountainous Ladakh and in the wild, tribal north-east frontier province. Nehru had liked to dismiss the Great Game, Kipling's old cut-and-thrust on the Roof of the World, as imperialist knavery. In 1959, India was still a spectator. Now, she must play willy-nilly. From what we have seen in Delhi, she does it with unexpected gusto: "We Pledge Our Last Drop of Blood to the Motherland"; "Mao—the New Hitler"; "Make the Chink Stink." The newspapers and billboards blare out the slogans. Who said India was pacifist?

Bombay, November 15th.

"INDIA'S not one nation, you know, it's twenty. India's like Europe. . . ." Thus do Delhi's Old India Hands love to confound the visitor. The piece of India you know is never the real India: that is always elsewhere. A transparent ploy, perhaps, or is there truth in it?

A month or so back, it might have seemed plausible. After much dispute, India had re-divided herself into Linguistic States. The change had logic on its side. The pessimists, who argued that the old lack-logic boundaries might be safer, were overridden. An administrative unit, the old state could not be a focus of local loyalties. The new Linguistic State might become dangerously self-assertive: India would become indeed not one, but twenty nations. Panditji's authority gone, India would disintegrate.

It was a respectable thesis. American scholars wrote books about it; Nehru himself was alarmed. Like many a doomy thesis, it was taken very seriously—more, it seems now, than it deserved. Perhaps the Chinese, too, were inclined to take it too seriously. Is it, indeed, one motive for the present aggression? If it is, they would seem to have miscalculated.

For what strikes the visitor—no matter what Old India Hands tell you—is India's essential unity. "Go to Bombay, ask what *they* think about the war," one was told in Delhi. "Go to Madras: you'll find it very quiet down there; they're a long way from the firing-line." Well, we went, and it was not like that at all.

Of course, Bombay *was* different. Bombay is big, cosmopolitan, worldly—a relief from Delhi's graceless, sprawling suburbanity. Bombay has modern traffic. Delhi's thoroughfares resemble Kipling's Grand Trunk

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Road, a deafening stampede of motor-rickshaws, bicycles, bullock carts. Bombay's a great city; Delhi's a great village.

And Bombay always was different. Where Delhi has its head in the clouds—under Panditji, as in the days of the Viceroy—Bombay is businesslike and bustling. The patriotic street-slogans are much as in Delhi, the mood different. A quip of A. D. Gorwala, a well-known Indian political commentator, catches it nicely. Just back from Delhi—it is the day the Chinese break through the front—he exclaims indignantly: "In Delhi, they only talk about 'saving world peace.' Fine! But I'd like to save the country, too." True, Menon beat Kripalani in working-class North Bombay only ten months back. But business Bombay has always been an island of hard-headed common sense in Panditji's India.

A safe rule for the visitor: In India, the fool sees two sides to every question, the wise man half-a-dozen. Consider these paradoxes: Is India a socialist country? Yes, she has a socialist Prime Minister. Which party supports Mr. Nehru? The Congress party. Who supports the Congress party? The peasantry, the lower middle class, big business. Do these support socialism? No sir.

A supplementary paradox: Has India a socialist economy? Yes, she has a Five Year Plan and almost seven per cent of her economy is nationalized. Has America a socialist economy? No, she has no Five Year Plan and a much larger percentage of her economy is nationalized.

THE MISTAKE, no doubt, is to apply a Western yardstick to so different a politics. Congress is more like the British Conservative party (or the German CDU) than any socialist party. Yet its applied socialism—its Five Year Plan, its schemes for village improvement—is more ambitious than anything European socialists hope for. Business, apparently, does not object. Why? Partly because socialism is "what Panditji wants." Partly because India is used to state *dirigisme*—that is how her railways were built—from British days. Partly, too, because business is interested in the contracts Delhi is able to bestow. So India is a socialist country. The socialists, of course, are in favor. So are the intellectuals. So are the Communists. Who is against?

The answer almost seems to be: Mr. Mineo Masani. Masani is the Secretary of the newly-founded Swatrantra party. His career is interesting. In the 30's, he was one of the leaders of the anti-Communist faction in the Congress socialist movement—at a time when other socialists like Jayaprakash Narayan were flirting with a Popular Front. Since then—his opponents would say—Masani has drifted far to the Right.

Masani himself denies this. He maintains that Swantrantra is a liberal party, though closer to the Free Democrats of Germany than to the British Liberals. He is proud of his party's affiliation in the Liberal International. What he maintains still more strongly—and with greater justice—is that in Swatrantra he has built up the true opposition party in India.

At the last elections, Swatrantra did well. It left the socialists and the Hindu religious extremists (the Jan Sangh) far behind, and almost equalled Communist parliamentary strength. Masani, a superb organizer, had every reason to be pleased. (The efficient man stands out in India: a member of a well-known Bombay family, Masani has long been associated with Tata's, the great industrial combine run by that most Westernized of India's minority groups, the Parsees.) Yet we were told that, as Maharaja after Maharaja galloped home on the Swatrantra ticket, Masani turned a little sour. With the peasantry's loyalty to their old rulers, and Tata's money, Swatrantra had won a remarkable victory. But it was not quite the liberal triumph Masani had hoped for.

Still it was a victory. And the party had in Rajagopalachari, last Governor-General of India, an imposing national figure to lead it. "Rajaji," as he is called, is no figurehead. At 83, he is immensely active, writing weekly editorials for *Swarajya* and making, even from distant Madras, his formidable presence felt in the country. His mind is still razor-sharp—he has that Hindu "cleverness" Nehru oddly lacks but which is so characteristic of men like Gandhi, Patel, and Kripalani.

When the Chinese invaded, Masani relates, Rajaji at once descended on Delhi. He confronted his central committee with that rare Indian thing: a clear alternative. "Either we admit defeat, sue for peace,

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acknowledge China as the superior power, and go on as before—or we build up an army, ask the West for aid, switch to a war economy, and drive the Chinese out. Which shall it be, gentlemen?" Rajaji won the day.

NATURALLY, government circles regard Swatrantra as "irresponsible"—which some recent right-wing criticism has certainly been. Still, Swatrantra—together with the socialists—has acted as a catalyst during the crisis; and for this India has reason to be grateful. But the pro-Westerners are often their own worst enemies. It's not easy, of course, to know how strong anti-Western sentiment really is. Just now, the West is very popular indeed; but that could quickly change in mercurial India. Naturally, the Westerner is most at ease with a journalist like Gorwala or a politician like Masani. But aren't these men, he can't but think, so rational and so sophisticated, *too* Westernized, *too* rational, *too* little rooted ever to exercise power in India? Doesn't Hindu India prefer her Morarji Desai, fads and all? Certainly Morarji and Masani would seem to be antithetical, almost mutually exclusive. Is it Panditji's strength, once again, that he represents a synthesis?

Or is this to complicate matters unduly? "After Nehru—what?" the visitor asks. "After Nehru—Congress," replies Gorwala. He may well be right. Western talk of a military takeover after Nehru is undoubtedly unjustified. On our last day in Bombay we see General Thorat, one of the generals who took his leave rather than work with Krishna Menon. About Menon, Thorat is enormously discreet, refuses to be drawn out. "Never cared for the man," is the most he will say: the rest is Sandhurst.

It is British Sandhurst training that stands between this army and any *coup d'état*. The Indian army has its traditions, and revolution is not one of them. In a sense, this is what Menon and others held against it. The Indian army, taken over from the British, played a rather negative role during the struggle for Independence. (A Sikh taxi-driver gave us his opinion of the new India: "Bloody Hindu *Raj*." He'd been a sergeant in the old army, seen thirty-five years' service; his comments on the present mess were given in choice, but unprintable, British army slang.) But the new army serves its new masters as faithfully as it served the British. Congress has nothing to fear from that quarter.

There's a rumor Thorat's to go to Delhi with Chavan, the new Defense Minister who has replaced Menon. Chavan has been Chief Minister here in Bombay for some years; after the Menon affair, he offered Thorat a job. Chavan is forty-seven, the youngest of Congress's Chief Ministers in the States. This evening, we are to watch him say goodbye to the State of Maharashtra on the Chaupati, Bombay's sea-front Speaker's Corner. It is a great occasion for Bombay; Chavan is a local boy made good. There are songs and garlands, a platform gaily festooned and decorated with that ancient Hindu symbol, the swastika. There are prayers in Sanskrit and Arabic, blessings from a rabbi, a Parsee, a Jain, an Anglican complete with dog collar and Authorized Version. Children bawl; the women offer gold and silver ornaments to Chavan for the National Defense Fund.

"After Nehru—Congress," Gorwala had remarked. Now it is being said: "After Nehru—Chavan." Is this likely? On the face of it, Chavan suffers from some of Morarji's disabilities: he has never, I think, been outside India. But he lacks the faddish fanaticism of the Gandhian Old Guard. First arrested at sixteen as an anti-British terrorist, he is descended from the war-like Marathi whom it took the three long Maratha Wars to subdue. In Bombay, he has shown firmness and flexibility. In many ways the tough Tammany Hall boss, he piloted Bombay through the stormy controversies about the merit of the Linguistic State. Unlike Menon, he'll have strong backing within the Congress party. Though he lacks Nehru's charismatic charm, Chavan is a man of the people, of the earth. On the platform, his manner is cheery, salty, forceful. He speaks of the war effort, and conveys a determination none of Nehru's speeches during the crisis had managed to convey. No demagogue, he can carry a crowd with ease. The relaxed, self-confident teddy-bear manner is impressive, as is the tolerant good humor. It is significant, friends remark, that Chavan makes no mention of Nehru: this is India's war, not Nehru's. Under Chavan, they say, India will have come of age. . . .

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Are the claims pitched too high? They may be· Chavan is not one of the great charismatic leaders—so much is clear. But after Panditji—might that not be a relief? Chavan could be India's Truman, and a Truman could be what India will need.

Calcutta, November 20th.

WE'RE in luck. An international flight from Bombay to Calcutta is available—all internal air services have been cancelled.

Later we learn why. The last two days have seen a disastrous collapse of the Indian front. Bombay knows what it knows from the newspapers—as yet, not much. Calcutta knows a little more. The city thrives on rumor; and the front is near enough for a fraction to be true. The hotel lobby is already crowded: these are the first refugees, English planters' families from the tea estates of Assam. Certainly, the war is closer here than in Bombay or Delhi; but the atmosphere is equally unreal. Might the Chinese bomb Calcutta? "Very possible," we are told. No preparations have been made.

Calcutta is a stronghold of the Communists—also of the Chinese. Belatedly and confusedly, a security drive has been launched. It is bad to have a yellow skin. Hastily, the resident Japanese paste "JAPANESE" on their car windows. On Chawringhee and Park Street, there is a rush to eliminate the offending "CHINESE" from Chinese restaurants. The press, to its credit, protests at the hysteria. There is, after all, little in India that Mao's men don't know. Many of the Calcutta Chinese are refugees from his regime.

The truth is, India *has* no security. Her armed forces, her civil service, her police are hopelessly infiltrated: "After ten years of *Hindi Chini bhai bhai,*" friends ask, "what else do you expect?" Equally, India has no military intelligence: nothing was known of Chinese preparations in Tibet, nothing of the outflanking movements which—only two days back—cost India two divisions on Sela Pass in the northeast. The feeling is strong that something should be done.

But what *can* be done? Perhaps it's too late; if the Chinese want Assam, it's theirs for the taking. Nehru has appealed to Kennedy for help—for men now, not only for arms. If Assam falls, Bengal could be a second Korea—perhaps fear of that may hold back the Chinese? Otherwise, what can India do? To use its air power to block China's communications in the Himalayan passes would provoke air attacks on Calcutta. West of Calcutta lie India's new steel towns. Against a superior Chinese air force, it would be madness to attack. The paralysis seems total.

And the Communists? In Calcutta we have no luck: Jhoti Basu, a local Communist boss we had hoped to meet, has just been arrested. There is relief that the government has acted at last. The Calcutta Communists, we are told, have been caught distributing candy together with little maps of the Near East frontier, marked with the Chinese version of the MacMahon Line. A canard, possibly; but in chaotic, teeming Calcutta almost anything is plausible, and little can be checked. Outside our hotel, a boy sells "patent ink-remover." He offers two brands, labeled *Yuri Gagarin* and *U-2 Flight.*

Frivolous, but tempting to see this too as just part of the Indian political comedy. The Communists are known to be strong here; strong enough, perhaps, to organize a putsch if the Chinese should advance. Our friend, Mr. Majumder, assistant editor of Calcutta's conservative *Statesman,* offers a cheerful perspective. "The thing about the Communist party," he tells us "is that it's like most other things in India: *not much good.*" He proposes Majumder's Law, affecting the relation between a given underdeveloped country and its Communist party. This runs: "A Communist party is in no case less corrupt and incompetent than the rest of a country's other public institutions." Majumder's Law is intriguing, we agree. But does it apply to Chiang and Mao? Majumder admits it does not: he had been thinking of India.

Talking with Majumder is a relief, a sharp ray of cynicism in the fog of India's *drôle de guerre.* If the Communists take power, after all, it won't be by distributing candy—or ink-remover. In any case, the Party is now in some disarray. Basu and many others have been arrested as "pro-Chinese" Communists; but "pro-Russian" Communists have not been touched. To the outsider, the distinction seems quaint; but

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it is rigorously applied. Dange, leader of the "pro-Russian" wing of the Party, has flown to Moscow—in effect on a mission for Nehru, though this is denied. Everywhere, the "pro-Russians" clamor to join local defense committees. The government is resisting this, though with a bad conscience. "The war," Panditji has said, "is not against Communism, it is against Chinese imperialism." It's clear that Nehru hopes to keep Russia's favor by protecting the "pro-Russians." In any case, the distinction is taken seriously—though not applied to everybody's satisfaction. A Communist delegation has been to Panditji to complain; it appears a mistake has been made. In the town of B., the *wrong* Communists have been arrested. . . .

We are in Calcutta when the cease-fire is announced. What do the Chinese want? How will India take the cease-fire? The immediate reaction is ominous: the unreal tension of the past weeks being relaxed, the old complacency rears its head.

Certainly, people are more skeptical now of Chinese intentions—there will be no return to the past. But confusion has succeeded panic; new monsters of wishful thinking are in the offing. Why have the Chinese stopped? Here are some of the current explanations:

> China's forces are over-extended, a crushing Indian counter-blow was expected, so China has chosen the better part of valor . . .
>
> China's aggression has aroused the Kremlin's ire, as Suez did Washington's; for the sake of World Communism, the Kremlin has stopped China by threatening to cut off her oil . . .
>
> China's aggression has so damaged her prestige in the uncommitted world, and among "decent" Communists, that pressure of world opinion has made her draw back . . .
>
> China has miscalculated. She thought India would disintegrate under the attack; in fact India is more united than before. The spectacle of India at bay has compelled the Chinese to back down.

As for the last explanation, can they really be thinking *that?* They can. We see a double cartoon today in the local press. On one page: Mao, a grinning urchin pulling at a sleeping tiger's tail. Turn over: tiger awake and snarling, Mao in full flight. The tiger is meant to represent—what else?—the patriotic fury of the Great Indian Public.

Tomorrow, back to Delhi. Perhaps, in the capital, a more realistic assessment awaits us. Or will Rao, our charming and sanguine host, and always a trustworthy barometer, have recovered by now his habitual optimism?

Delhi, November 27th.

NEEDLESS to say, he has. Rao is in excellent spirits. Why? we probed. Well, Chavan is at the Defense Ministry now, and wonders may be expected. There is to be a two-million-man army, a strong air force. The people want it, and Western help will be forthcoming. In two, three years—no matter how long—India is going to be strong, and able to hit back. And the Chinese, why have they stopped? The explanations he gives are familiar: we have heard them in Calcutta.

How can Chavan do all this, without Panditji's backing or strong popular pressure? We are skeptical. Already, Panditji is being ambiguous again about a Kashmir settlement. And public opinion? The new complacency looks like a true reflection of it. According to Kripalani, India has no such thing as public opinion, Panditji's a tribal chieftain. Perhaps Kripalani is right; perhaps this is the secret of Panditji's strength. A telepathic bond between tribe and chieftain.

Kingsley Martin, former editor of the *New Statesman* and the oldest of Old India Hands among English political journalists, is in town. I had seen him before leaving London; he had been most generous with advice. Having followed his Indian reporting for so long, I was anxious to see him in an Indian context. No other Englishman—the late Harold Laski, perhaps, excepted—has had so enormous an influence on modern India. What would Kingsley Martin's reaction be to the new, angry mood of the Indian people, so unlike the India he had admired?

In London, he had been apprehensive. It would not be the old India. There had been no more loyal supporter of the old Indian nationalism; but jingoism was another matter. He was not looking forward

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to the trip. Once in India, he told us, it had been as he expected. The Indians were being chauvinistic and silly; the country was drifting to the Right. He was beginning to fear Nehru's work might be undone.

Sitting in Delhi's brilliant winter sunshine, we debate the point. "It's the best weather in the world," cries Kingsley, one arm flung sunward. One senses, in the remark and the gesture, something of his feeling for India. It is the European's India of saints and sages: the land where the lost promises of Europe are magically fulfilled. How right that Kingsley should look sunward, where most visitors see only the surface, the confusion and the decay! What's unique in Kingsley, and appealing, is the way he has secularized his India: the Wisdom of the East is no longer the Bhagavadgita, but the Five Year Plan—and it's easy to forget how much the Five Year Plan, on which India's progress hinges, owes to Kingsley Martin's preaching.

Yet these weeks are a tragic conjunction, and he is not unaware of it. His vision—it was also Nehru's—had presupposed an India at peace, a *hortus inclusus* in a world of *Realpolitik* and *raison d'état*. Suddenly, violently, there's a gulf between that visionary India and the angry, wounded, disillusioned India of these weeks. In her fury, India is turning on those she blames for deceiving her. (The truth is, she deceived herself: seduced by a flattering role as the world's moral arbiter.) The name of Kingsley Martin has suddenly lost its magic, his remark about Indian jingoism is deeply resented. Yet all that has happened is that India has grown up. In Kingsley's own words, "Mao's saddest achievement is that India is now behaving like any other nation."

Is that quite true? Perhaps it's too early to say. Has India discovered a new taste for the concrete and down-to-earth? The welcome given to Chavan could be a sign of it. Negatively, too, there are new signs of impatience with theory.

WE MEET Jayaprakash Narayan, former leader of the Socialist party, perhaps the most attractive personality in Indian politics. Jayaprakash has time for a few words before a political rally he is to address. "How would the West react, d'you think, if India recognized the Dalai Lama as the head of a Tibetan government in exile?"

An interesting idea. The move would be awkward for the Chinese, and would not make the lot of the Tibetans worse than it is. Indeed, it might make it possible for India to assist the Khampa guerillas. It would, at least, be a moral gesture to a people India has done little to help. Still, if India does not mean to liberate Tibet—and Jayaprakash does not suggest it—ought she to encourage armed resistance? Jayaprakash agrees: it's the same dilemma the West had to face in Hungary.

Later, the rally. Jayaprakash speaks in his slow, patient, unemphatic way—like all Indian politicians, he speaks in public as though he were teaching backward children. But it is not the same Jayaprakash. He speaks of non-violence, Gandhian *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is not, he explains, non-resistance. Not to resist evil is itself evil. But the means—Gandhiji taught us—are all-important. Total non-violence remains the idea. Impractical? But no, if we were perfect in *ahimsa,* we would be irresistible. (Unkindly, an Indian friend suggests that those who preach *ahimsa* should go and practice it—on the northeast frontier But the implication is unfair. Jayaprakash would go.) His conclusion? We should seek, while resisting the aggressor—if necessary by violence—to put our own house in order, to redistribute the land, to build more hospitals. . . .

It is magnificent, but somehow it is not politics. One senses, too, that this is the opinion of the crowd. This is not what they have come to hear: they have heard it too often before. In the new mood, Jayaprakash's views seem oddly irrelevant, a relic from the Gandhian past. Indian friends feel this. From now on, they say, an Indian politician who doesn't take into account what these weeks have done to India will not be listened to.

Nehru knows this. That is why he never was in real danger during the crisis—despite what the commentators said. His sense of the people's will is uncanny: if the people want peace, he will provide it; if the people want war, he will be their Churchill. The strains of wartime leadership may—as is being said—destroy him physically. Spiritually, he dominates India.

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EARLY in December, we are granted an interview with him. Like all Indian politicans, Nehru is charmingly accessible. A little late, he is apologetic and offers to share our consolatory tea-and-biscuits. It is seven in the evening; Panditji is tired, disposed to chat rather than be questioned. He speaks of the Indian Communists—with a merry twinkle: "They're in bad shape, don't you think?" He speaks of non-violence, echoing much of what Jayaprakash is thinking, but stressing the practical aspects more, the spiritual less. It is the same with non-alignment. We sit beneath photographs of Nasser, Nkrumah, and Sukarno. "Ah, yes," he says, "there's non-alignment *in theory*. . . . But we're not non-aligned against China, are we?" He's evidently anxious for the West not to misunderstand. *Ahimsa* is an ideal; but India will defend herself, one way or the other. That is why he is bitter, as are so many, with what Kingsley Martin has written in his recent pieces for the *New Statesman*. "He thinks we're jingoistic, does he? What does he expect?" The promised ten minutes stretch, orientally and imperceptibly, to forty-five. We move to go. Courteous in all things, Panditji sees us to the door and into the waiting taxi.

It is now mid-December. The Colombo Conference of neutral powers has met, and disappointed India by refusing to take sides. The Chinese are withdrawing; negotiations are hinted at, officially denied, tacitly confirmed. "My assessment? The war's over," declares Kripalani. Kriplanai looks to be right. China will wait till the spring; India can do nothing but accept her defeat.

Conclusions? A handful: negative and positive. Chavan and Thorat are at the Defense Ministry; that mess will be cleared up. There will be Western arms aid on a considerable scale; the old inhibitions are gone—even Panditji can't revive them. "India has found a new unity": that is also true—though Indians are optimistic if they think China has taken fright at the spectacle. Non-alignment now exists only "in theory." For her defense, India must look to herself —and her friends. Independence looks to be more expensive now than it once did.

But an optimistic assessment could be badly wrong. In India, moods quickly evaporate, the "new unity" may be no more than talk.

On our last day, we hear a sad story, which we know to be true and hope to be untypical. A friend's wife, two weeks back, asked the wives of her Delhi locality to form a first-aid group. There was general enthusiasm: the group, thirty strong, would meet at our friend's house for its first instruction. In the meantime, the cease-fire is announced. The meeting is duly held: five volunteers appear; the group dissolves.

"Some people feel pretty happy the Chinese stopped when they did," is our friend's comment. "Personally, I feel they stopped too soon."

London, New Year 1963.

A POSTSCRIPT. Why did the Chinese stop? If they start again, can the Indians stop them? Will India join the West? What happens when China gets the Bomb? London's awakened to India again, suddenly, after a fifteen-year oblivion. There's a readiness to help; but a feeling that it's America's baby now. For what it's worth, I offer friends my guesses on the Sino-Soviet riddle. No, they didn't stop because Moscow whistled them back. Yes, their communications were pretty stretched, and they didn't want Western intervention. Can the Indians stop them? Yes, if—. Will India drop non-alignment? Yes and No. She'll take arms from the West, but she'll need to keep Russia sweet.

Paradoxically, then, my guess is that we'll all get what we want in the end, if the Chinese don't have another go. India will get her arms. The West will get a new friend. China has staked her claim, rather formidably, to be top dog in Asia (and spoiled Nehru's reputation as the high priest of non-alignment). Russia hasn't done as well, but she's decided, apparently, that she'd rather see a pro-Western India than a pro-Chinese one. My estimate: India should take the hint. Indian pro-Westerners are now all eager to rush India into our embraces. I don't agree. Russian advances to India mustn't be spurned hastily. True, it isn't love, but it may be something better: self-interest. Is non-alignment dead, then? Not so fast. There's life in the old dog yet.

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NORMAN MAILER

Responses & Reactions III

This is the third in a bi-monthly series of personal commentaries by the distinguished novelist NORMAN MAILER *on selections from Martin Buber's two-volume collection,* Tales of the Hasidim (*Vol. I,* The Early Masters; *Vol. II,* The Later Masters).

*Before the Coming of the Messiah**

The Baal Shem said:
"Before the coming of the Messiah there will be great abundance in the world. The Jews will get rich. They will become accustomed to running their houses in the grand style and moderation will be cast to the winds. Then the lean years will come; want and a meager livelihood, and the world will be full of poverty. The Jews will not be able to satisfy their needs, grown beyond rhyme or reason. And then the labor which will bring forth the Messiah, will begin."

Yet to our knowledge, no Messiah was brought forth from the concentration camps. Or were a hundred delivered to die with the victims, secret Angels of Death?

It is possible the Jews will never recover from the woe that no miracle visited the world in that time. Perhaps that is why we are now so interested in housing, in social planning, interfaith councils, and improvement of the PTA in the suburbs. Perhaps that is why half of the American Jews have fallen in love with a super delicatessen called Miami, and much of the other half have developed a subtly overbearing and all but totalitarian passion for the particular sallow doctor who is their analyst. Perhaps that is why we have lost the root. And have the lust to build a world of plastic surfaces whose historic root is urea.

From the Look-out of Heaven†

At a time of great anguish for Israel, Rabbi Elimelekh brooded more and more on his griefs. Then his dead master, the maggid of Mezritch, appeared to him. Rabbi Elimelekh cried out: "Why are you silent in such dreadful need?" He answered: "In Heaven we see that all that seems evil to you is a work of mercy."

To die before one's time in a gas chamber may offer the good fortune that one does not have to live beyond one's time and be kept alive by medicines which do not reach the disease but only deaden the pain. In a gas chamber one loses one's life and conceivably saves one's death. If there is eternity, and we possess a soul which can either carry through life into death, or perish in life and never reach eternity, then the real need for a Messiah would appear in that part of the world, or history, where souls are becoming dead rather than lives being lost. By this logic, there would be more unconscious demand for the Messiah in a country at peace than a city at war.

The logic is unassailable if God has no need of Time and merely studies the way we save our souls or lose them. But if there is any urgency in God's intent, if we are not actors working out a play for our salvation, but rather soldiers in an army which seeks to carry some noble conception of Being out

* *The Early Masters,* Schocken Books, p. 82.

† *The Early Masters,* p. 112.

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across the stars, or back into the protoplasm of life, then a portion of God's creative power was extinguished in the camps of extermination. If God is not all-powerful but existential, discovering the possibilities and limitations of His creative powers in the form of the history which is made by His creatures, then one must postulate an existential equal to God, an antagonist, the Devil, a principle of Evil whose signature was the concentration camps, whose joy is to waste substance, whose intent is to prevent God's conception of Being from reaching its mysterious goal. If one considers the hypothesis that God is not all-powerful, indeed not the architect of Destiny, but rather, the creator of Nature, then evil becomes a record of the Devil's victories over God. It is not so comforting a postulation as the notion of God Omnipotent able to give us Eternal Rest, but it must also be seen that if God is all-powerful, the Jews cannot escape the bitter recognition that He considered one of His inscrutable purposes to be worth more than the lives of half His chosen people. Indeed this recognition may have paralyzed the organized religious spirit of the American Jews. The Catholic Church becomes more powerful every year, the American Protestants have produced several existential philosophers of importance—who have come to a consideration of the mysteries of anxiety—but the conventional Jews in America, which is to say the ones who are formally attached to the religion, build new synagogues which look like recreation centers and go to them because it would make their mothers happy. *Angst* is left to the mechanical formulations of the analyst who now leans less on Freud and more on Equanil.

*The Teaching of the Soul**

Rabbi Pinhas often cited the words: "'A man's soul will teach him'," and emphasized them by adding: "There is no man who is not incessantly being taught by his soul."

One of his disciples asked: "If this is so, why don't men obey their souls?"

"The soul teaches incessantly," Rabbi Pinhas explained, "but it never repeats."

If God and the Devil are locked in an implacable war, it might not be excessive to assume their powers are separate, God the lord of inspiration, the Devil a monumental bureaucrat of repetition. To learn from an inner voice the first time it speaks to us is a small bold existential act, for it depends upon following one's instinct which must derive, in no matter how distorted a fashion, from God, whereas institutional knowledge is appropriated by the Devil. The soul speaks once and chooses not to repeat itself, because to repeat a message is to give the Devil in one's psyche a chance to prepare a trap. People repeat the same message over and over in order to employ a Satanic principle —the audience before them must be deadened by the monotony of making the same response, or must reveal—by the separate ways in which the question is answered—some protected corner of their nature.

For the Sake of Renewal†

Rabbi Pinhas said: "Solomon, the preacher, says: 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' because he wants to destroy the world, so that it may receive new life."

Not all destruction destroys. Not all construction creates. If the world, seen through the eyes of Marx, is the palpable embodiment of a vast collective theft—the labor which was stolen from men by other men over the centuries—then one need not retire in terror from the idea that the power of the world belongs to the Devil, and God needs men to overthrow him.

The entrance of the Devil into aesthetics is visible in a new airline terminal, a luxury hotel, a housing project, or a civic center. Their flat surfaces speak of power without vision, their plastic materials suggest flesh without the unmanageable details of blood.

*The Secret of Sleep***

Rabbi Zusya's younger son said:

"The zaddikim who, in order to serve, keep going from sanctuary to sanctuary, and from world to world, must cast their life from them, time and again, so that they may receive a new spirit, that over and over, a new revelation may float above them. This is the secret of sleep."

Can it be that insomnia is the rage of the Devil determined not to let us sleep long enough to receive a new spirit and thus be

* *The Early Masters*, p. 121.

† *The Early Masters*, p. 124.

** *The Early Masters*, p. 252.

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curious enough to defy our pact with him again? Or can insomnia also be the anger of the Lord who knows that the new spirit he provides in sleep will be handed over to the Devil in the morning? On those occasions when we do not know if it is God or the Devil we must fear, do we not have insomnia with *Angst*, does not madness insinuate itself? There is a suggestion to go out on the street and look for the adventure One or the Other is demanding. Most of us stay home. All right then, so we die of cancer, goes the sigh in the wind of our small depleted courage.

*With the Evil Urge**

Once, when Rabbi Pinhas entered the House of Study, he saw that his disciples, who had been talking busily, stopped and started at his coming. He asked them: "What were you talking about?"

"Rabbi," they said, "we were saying how afraid we are that the Evil Urge will pursue us."

"Don't worry," he replied. "You have not gotten high enough for it to pursue you. For the time being, you are still pursuing it."

* *The Early Masters*, p. 132.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

"MY NEGRO PROBLEM"—I

To the Editor of Commentary:

"My Negro Problem—And Ours" [Feb.] is important, at times profound, and above all, honest. The level of dialogue on the racial and other important social and political issues cannot, at this particular time in American history, be determined by the anticipation of angry protests or intense disagreements. Those who dare to think and feel deeply about social problems are obligated to organize their thoughts as coherently as they can and communicate them with candor. It is my opinion that Mr. Podhoretz's article is an eloquent example of the fact that the true intellectual has no choice. . . .

It happens that I agree with most of what Mr. Podhoretz says. But I do not share completely his belief that the racial problem in America, or anywhere else, can be solved by miscegenation or intermarriage. The fact is, there has been and will be an undetermined amount of miscegenation, and this has not softened the problem. And of course there is a distinction between miscegenation and intermarriage. The type of miscegenation which has occurred in America has reflected an important aspect of the total pattern of racial injustice; namely, the desire of white men to exploit Negro women sexually as part of a system in which they exploit Negro men economically and politically. While white Americans have not invented this system wherein higher status individuals seek to maintain a system in which they have priority socially, sexually, and economically, they certainly have reinforced this pattern in race relations. This is precisely the distinction between miscegenation and intermarriage. Intermarriage takes place in a situation of equal status—miscegenation involves sexual exploitation of individuals of unequal status. It would follow, therefore, that if one had widespread intermarriage, this would be indicative of the absence of the problem with which we are concerned—widespread miscegenation, without intermarriage would be a symptom of the intensification of the problem. . . .

Without the type of honest and courageous communication represented by James Baldwin's article and Mr. Podhoretz's we are all doomed to that stagnation of self-delusion which is tantamount to intellectual, moral, and probably literal death.

Kenneth B. Clark
Department of Psychology
The City College
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Reading Norman Podhoretz's candid article, I reflected on the nearly infinite variety of settings in which young people grow up and go to school in this country. Are there boys who grow up in America without ever having a fight—or ever realizing that they are afraid of fights? (What girls encounter is different again and little is said about it in most accounts we have.) To illustrate: my own childhood was quite unlike Mr. Podhoretz's; when he was fighting his way home, fending off Negro boys who perhaps resented the fact that he and others like him had organized homes, I was being taken by a governess to Rittenhouse Square, geographically not far from the Negro South Side of Philadelphia, or attending country day schools, or the downtown William Penn Charter School. Like Podhoretz I feared and admired the graceful athletes in school, but all of them were white and some of them aristocratic. Indeed, what for Mr. Podhoretz and many others were issues on the margins of race were for me in my childhood issues on the margins of social class. I learned to fear tough whites, not only as a child but later—the slowly-hardening gaze of the drunk who concludes that I feel superior to him and proceeds to want to beat me up. I have never thought of America as a peace-loving democracy.

Our personal experiences are, as it were, replaced by categories of social visibility; and the very emphasis Mr. Podhoretz puts on physical grace is a benign side of the emphasis our society puts on appearance—not only color but height, good looks, shape, and outward marks of breeding. Mr. Pod-

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horetz's experiences as a child could easily have been forced, as he suggests, to flow into the general pattern of anti-Negro feeling in our society. Indeed the problem of all candor, in this field as in many others, is the multiplicity of unintended audiences: most importantly, of course, the white racists who wait to pounce on every scrap of evidence of Negro indolence and violence and disorganization to support their preconceptions; but also the Negro racists for whom it is more convenient that *all* whites "are sick in their feelings about Negroes" because then one can never be disappointed or gulled or robbed of one's well-justified hatred. (There are many Jews who feel this way about Germans, and some about all non-Jews.) Those whose experiences do not fit them for the prevailing preconceptions can often acquire a false childhood, a false memory, shaped to the present prejudices of their sub-group.

There is even a certain amount of distortion in James Baldwin's magnetic *New Yorker* essay. Baldwin modestly attributes to his being a Negro miseries that were his as a special kind of Negro (among other things, a preacher's son), in Harlem but not of it. But his situation seems to me to be far more difficult than that of Norman Podhoretz (as I'm sure the latter would grant also), for he had opposition rather than support to fall back upon at home and was working toward a personal future in which only he believed and to which virtually nothing in his Negro environment gave the slightest support but only mockery and despair.

For me and for other fortunately situated whites, "the racial nightmare" was not central in our childhood and has become central through intellectual understanding rather than through projecting onto Negroes resentment for the inhibitions and overprotectiveness that were the other side of our advantages. . . .

I mention all this, as I have said, to illustrate the great diversity of childhood in America about which we know so little, and to warn against the dangers of overgeneralization to which we can be tempted by the very concreteness of Mr. Baldwin's and Mr. Podhoretz's accounts. For example, though I think I have a pretty keen sense of Negro hatred of whites, I am not wholly persuaded by Mr. Baldwin that all Negroes hate whites in spite of the fact that virtually all have good reasons for doing so, as well as—until very recently—good reasons for pretending not to. Let us then speak for ourselves as Mr. Podhoretz has done, and in doing so speak in some tentative measure for others also, but always with awareness of the vastness of the country. Naturally, each of us is apt to think that *his* problem is *the* problem by which our society, plainly so threatened by its inner psychic and social strains, will live or die. The Negro problem, or more properly the white problem, is so central that it seems altogether likely that, could the racial nightmare be ended, we would "achieve our country, and change the history of the world." However, although violence is endemic to America and indifferently distributed and directed in different sections and strata, so that there are more suicides per capita in Vermont and fewer homicides than in Mississippi, the danger that these tensions, barely contained within, will be directed outward against the ever available and often provoking Communists is grave. But I am not certain that, to be safe (and safe therefore to experience the terrible and living horrors with which Mr. Baldwin confronts us all) from this, we must first be pure on the race front. The two struggles—for a more orderly and pacific world and for a less fratricidal and more loving society—are linked but not identical. As Mr. Podhoretz says at the end, we can learn to behave better than we feel, better than we in some childish sense "are," and I see both the vanity and the opportunity of all our problems as subordinate to the question of maintaining a reasonably intact world.

DAVID RIESMAN
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the guise of the "good liberal" he purports to be Norman Podhoretz has written nothing short of a racist article. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz is as incapable of mitigating his hate as the most die-hard Southerner: "The hatred I still feel for Negroes . . . " While holding fast to his stereotype of the Negro and regarding them *en masse* as tough, erotic, truant, graceful animals, his animadversions are on a par with those of the most rabid anti-Semite. This breed regards the Jew as vulgar, offensive, sharp, and bargaining.

Mr. Podhoretz is seemingly concerned about the solution to the Negro problem. But, in these crucial times, when children as innocent and guileless as his very own, are prohibited from attending classes because they are black, he abets the stereo-

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typed image of the Negro. By rationalizing the adult feelings that grew out of his ghetto childhood, Mr. Podhoretz reinforces the white man's negative image of the Negro.

When Mr. Podhoretz was a child, he spoke as a child, he understood as a child, and he thought as a child. Now that he is a man, he should put away childish things.

MARVLOUS ELAINE HARRISON
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "My Negro Problem—And Ours" does Norman Podhoretz offer us anything more than another version of the "waiting-for-a change-in-the-hearts-of-men" ideology refurbished for middle-class liberal consumption? . . .

The middle-class liberal is acutely aware of his "twisted feelings"—especially when Negroes attempt to move into his neighborhood, but he is also aware that trying to slow the pace of desegregation by talking of the necessity of "waiting for a change in the hearts of men" has a decidely illiberal sound. Mr. Podhoretz's analysis of the problem saves the day for him. By advocating miscegenation he retains his liberal status and needn't feel uneasy about his personal resistance to desegregation since it won't solve the "real" problem, anyway. Nor will he have to face Mr. Podhoretz's moment of truth: By concentrating on his own soul he will help to keep the present structure of Negro-white relations intact, and therefore his daughters will have little or no opportunities for even defining a Negro as a possible husband.

One may agree with Mr. Podhoretz that the nub of the "Negro problem" is that "special feeling about color" that all white Americans acquire regardless of personal history. But this "special feeling" is the result of institutionalized segregation, and the current efforts at desegregation aim at subverting this pattern. To the extent that these efforts are successful they will allow the formation of more human patterns of relationships which, hopefully, will lead to higher and higher rates of intermarriage, and this, in turn, will quicken the erosion of the "special feeling about color." The possibility of "blood running in the streets" is an inherent risk of the program of desegregation that must be faced and dealt with; attempting to avoid *that* problem by visualizing a "huge social transformation" through an individual cure of souls means that in the next generation another James Baldwin will have to preach to us again with even less cause for believing that anyone is listening.

MURRAY HAUSKNECHT
Long Island City, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"My Negro Problem—And Ours" is, I think, a unique work. . . . In his brave decision to remember honestly, Mr. Podhoretz has given us something of genuine importance, of disturbing originality.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is perhaps too easy to praise another man's courage; on the race question, and in politics generally, such praise has too often been the shortest route to evasion. But Norman Podhoretz's courage in writing and publishing "My Negro Problem—And Ours" must be praised and supported. The moral clarity of this astonishing essay is of that rare kind that really does represent an entirely new beginning for all future discussion of the Negro problem, at least so far as white liberals are concerned. Everyone knows—and has always known—that the problem of racial integration is inseparable from the issue of miscegenation and that all talk of integration that stops short of facing the "brutal" issue in its largest social and biological consequences is dishonest rhetoric designed to save the remnants of the very assumptions it pretends to attack. In this matter the most reactionary Southerners have often been more honest—closer to the truth, anyway—than enlightened liberal opinion that tacitly preserves the separate-but-equal ideal when it comes to the sexual mingling of the races while promoting integration in schools, busses, and other social facilities. Mr. Podhoretz's candid essay tears the mask off this duplicitous thinking in a way nothing else in recent literature has. It places the issue of miscegenation—as a socially desirable solution rather than as what it has been in the past: a despised private option—firmly in the foreground of all future discussion, which is where it belongs. His essay thus provides the white liberal with the one thing he has always lacked in dealing with the Negro problem: a position, anchored in the most difficult reality, from which he can hope to build a believable future. The polite fiddle-faddle has been removed at last, and we can begin now to

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see where we are and toward what we are moving. The pain that many enlightened people must have felt on reading this essay was the pain of confronting a truth too long ignored.

HILTON KRAMER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is probably perfectly valid to write about Negro-white tension in America without setting oneself the task of finding causes or solutions, to offer one's own experiences as perhaps at least interesting, even to take the long tragic view and assert that there is no solution, as Norman Podhoretz does. If he had done only that his essay would be sometimes moving, sometimes embarrassing, but mainly unexceptionable. Unfortunately, he does not limit himself to that. He goes on, almost in spite of himself, to look for reasons while holding that reasons no longer matter—the problem of hate just *is*. He wonders plaintively why the Negroes in his neighborhood should have hated the Italian and Jewish immigrants who had no share in Negro enslavement, as though the Negroes there were in any position to make such nice distinctions and to hate selectively. He sees himself as a liberal and he knows his liberalism has not saved him from hate. Then by the easy and familiar inductive leap he holds all liberals guilty of as compromised an attitude as his, thereby absolving himself of responsibility. He feels in any case that the problem has been forced on him—by Negroes as well as white people—and begs off finally by ascribing an almost occult power to color as the ultimate cause of race hate.

Podhoretz is so infatuated with the word "hate," he so nearly revels in its use, that it becomes finally an excuse for his failure to come to a comprehension, if not resolution, of *his* Negro problem. He so frightens (and comforts) himself with the word that he abandons the intellect: learned, rational understanding, which he asserts he has, is no good because the hate (for many people more likely "discomfort") persists. In a kind of reverse utopianism he despairs of solution or even progress where there is "hatred" or "envy" or "rejection." Yet James Baldwin, whom Podhoretz quotes for some reason or other in his puzzled and inconclusive paragraph on Black Muslimism, has said (in a recent number of *The Progressive*) that it is impertinent for white people to think they must learn to *accept* the Negro. If Podhoretz were less carried away by his "hate" he would be less willing to abandon reason and political process as means toward the solution of *our* Negro problem.

But Podhoretz cannot refrain from solving it after all: the way for a problem to be solved is for the problem no longer to exist. After raising the spectre of bloodshed because the Negro wants equality now, after sneering at the white "liberal's" gradualism, he bravely asks for eventual total assimilation. He says whimperingly to the Negro, you make me uncomfortable, you make me feel inadequate, you worry me because you are different—so please stop being different. This is the same old story of asking the Negro to do it all. This is asking the Negro, who has been thwarted and denied in every endeavor *because* he is a Negro, to give over the drive to succeed, to count, while at the same time remaining a Negro. Podhoretz can understand why Jews want to survive: they are tied to a memory of past glory. But not the Negroes. Their past is stigma, their color is a stigma, their "vision of the future is the hope of erasing the stigma by making color irrelevant, by making it disappear as a fact of consciousness." Again Podhoretz has trouble with his words. The Negroes' past and color are *stigmas* only on white Americans. To make color irrelevant is one thing and is all that most Negroes and most liberals ask; to make it disappear as a fact of consciousness is another and is what Podhoretz seems to need for his own self respect. To put it more precisely than he has been willing to do, his vision of the future is of erasing the stigma on the white man's past by erasing the Negro.

JOAN S. WESTON

Amherst, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I write to commend you for publishing "My Negro Problem—And Ours," which seemed to me an act of supreme courage. This is not to say that I agreed with every point Mr. Podhoretz was making, especially the conclusions he drew from his own personal persecution, as a boy, at the hands of Negro boys. Nonetheless, there is in Mr. Podhoretz's essay a self-searching and self-judging honesty which is rare among liberals when it comes to dealing with the color problem. And I may add that I, as a South African Negro, speak as one who knows something of the hypocrisies, of the pain and rage, which surround the discussion of color prejudice in that unhappy country.

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Mr. Podhoretz's contribution to an honest discussion of the relationship between white and black people is especially timely because, if one assesses the mood of black people correctly around the world, we may not have too much time in which to continue talking decently to each other across the color-line. Every so often editors bemoan the inroads made by bureaucracies upon the freedom of speech, and yet little of it is used to enlarge, however painfully, the areas of our understanding.

LEWIS NKOSI

London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The fact that both Negroes and whites are beginning to speak and write candidly about their deepest feelings on matters of race relations—as James Baldwin has in his recent articles in the *New Yorker, Harper's* and elsewhere, and as Mr. Podhoretz did in the February issue of COMMENTARY—seems to me a most hopeful sign. I hope that readers of both races will recognize that this dialogue is being conducted in a humane and constructive spirit—even though it is bound to touch upon a good many raw nerves. The end result, I hope, will be a much wider realization that the country's racial problem involves emotional issues which cannot be solved by legislation, lawsuits, or police action; that the fault is not all on one side; and that the first step toward resolving such issues is to bring them into the light of honest discussion.

I cannot agree with all of the points Mr. Podhoretz made. For example, I am not convinced that hatred between the races is as common as he suggests. Neither can I believe that inter-marriage is likely to prove a practical solution for the problems he discusses, at least within the foreseeable future. I'm quite sure, however, that it is a healthy thing to have such questions raised, and I hope that Negro writers will continue the discussion with the honesty and good will which are so evident in Mr. Podhoretz's article.

JOHN FISCHER
Editor-in-chief

Harper's Magazine
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It takes a monumental capacity for confessional honesty to have written as Norman Podhoretz has written in "My Negro Problem—And Ours." For the first time to my recollection an American Jew (also a precarious phenomenon) has had the courage to acknowledge the corruptibility of consciousness to which he—in spite of all inherited wisdom and sublime influence—is liable. . . .

Yet I cannot agree with him or Mr. Baldwin that color is a political problem. It is rather too easy in my view to make an existential fact into a political issue merely because one passionately seeks to eliminate it. Color is not removable and miscegenation—whatever the daring of Mr. Podhoretz's conclusion—is not (as he admits) a programmatic principle. . . .

ARTHUR A. COHEN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I doubt that any other thing I have ever read so impressed me for intelligence and honesty as "My Negro Problem—And Ours." It must have been an act of great courage also.

CHARLES S. HYNEMAN
Department of Government
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I don't often write fan mail to editors, but I was deeply touched by "My Negro Problem—And Ours," which, I think, sums up a state of mind with regard to the Negro felt by more people than care to admit it. . . .

CHARLES RADDOCK

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"In thinking about the Jews I have often wondered whether their survival as a distinct group was worth one hair on the head of a single infant . . ."—"I cannot see how it will ever be realized unless color does in fact disappear."—The solution is so easy I wonder how no one else ever thought of it. If we had no Negroes or Jews we would have no minority problems. If this is a proposed solution, then COMMENTARY should start looking for a new editor. Or, better still, no editor will be necessary since the very reason for the existence of COMMENTARY will have disappeared. It is fairly elementary that in the absence of Jews, Poles, French, Italians, Gypsies, etc., Hitler would have slaughtered all people with long noses, or short foreheads. Having eliminated the black color by intermarriage, when do we start on the brown, the yellow, and the red? This attitude proves that there

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can be a racial Munich as well as a political one. To elimate persecution, bigotry, prejudice, and the like we just remove the victim. Thus a new school of thought is born. And this from the editor of COMMENTARY! Shame.

MORTON WEITZNER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's interesting and honorable discussion of his Negroes is somewhat unreasonable. He is, of course, right to conclude that where there is a social injustice one must simply remedy it, period. But since, in this area, to do justice arouses such emotional turmoil in himself, he ought, in justice to himself, to consult psychotherapy and find out why it is so hard for *him* to be rational. Childhood traces at the level that he explores them for us do not explain anything, for why is he still susceptible, though his real situation is so different? They are obviously screen-memories. (The same applies to much of Baldwin.)

I certainly shall not presume to mention the unconscious conflicts which (to me) appear in his childhood narrative, but let me make two general observations: (1) wherever society has imposed a boundary—whether racial, religious, national, or moral—there is bound to be rampant unconscious projection across it, to bolster each one's own shaky identity by lowering anxiety; and (2) for many people, an underlying Oedipus-complex makes forbidden and uncanny those who are "like" one's own family. . . .

Podhoretz's case of miscegenation as a remedy is typical of his avoidance of his own concrete reality. Let us hope that people will not marry to miscegenate but because of personal liking and physical attraction. If Podhoretz would imagine more concretely, he would realize that his daughter's putative Negro boyfriend would be somebody that he would dislike or like and that that would determine whether or not he would tear his hair.

PAUL GOODMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article is a masterpiece of courageous and acute journalism. It is accurate in its perception and tremendously impressive in its conclusions. My deepest congratulations.

LEE R. BOBKER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have never been beaten by Negroes, only by whites, but my feelings of terror as a boy were exactly of the order of Mr. Podhoretz's and appeared in the same general circumstances. If you were around the school yard toward dusk and later, and you did not belong to a gang, you would most likely be beaten.

I know what Mr. Podhoretz means, too, by the admiration a boy feels for the sheer toughness of the boys who fight all the time, and who live in such a way that the police, teachers, parents, anybody else on the side of authority is an enemy for whom one has only contempt. . . .

The trouble with most educational systems in poor neighborhoods is that the schools are not planned as instruments of the community, but only as buildings where subjects—vocational or academic—are taught, and the authority of the teacher has no basis in the community as a whole.

In Mr. Podhoretz's case he learned not to hate because his family and friends educated him not to. As for his solution, it will be quite a while before everybody is intermarried and nobody is white or black. In the meantime, what we have to do is to pour our intellectual and moral energies into the solution of the true educational problem—teaching children to live in a community. We know how to do that, and whenever the community has really tried, by economic, social, and educational change taken all together, it has been successful. At least it has reduced the hating to a manageable size, shifted it to an individual basis and away from a black-white, Jew-Gentile, Italian-Irish battle.

Although I can agree with Mr. Podhoretz that the blacks have to *see* whites and cannot expect the whites to do all the looking, the whites do have the power and therefore the responsibility to arrange for everyone to see everyone else.

That is what educators and intellectuals should be dealing with instead of trying to make education a way of stuffing academic material down the throats of a whole population. . . .

HAROLD TAYLOR

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am beset by some of the feelings about Negroes which Mr. Podhoretz's article describes with such admirable honesty, and so no doubt are most other middle-class whites. Nevertheless, I think that his childhood ex-

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periences with Negroes may have been more traumatic than those of most of us, thus scarring his feelings today—as well they might—but in the process also affecting his conclusions about the problem of Negro-white relations. . . .

The white fear-and-hatred may involve projective mechanisms against the outgroup, but I think the primary explanation lies not in psychological or psychoanalytic concepts but in the facts of economic and social inequality. Since Negroes are at the bottom of the socio-economic heap, whites who come into contact with them fear the loss of status. This affects most directly the low-income whites—and this is why they have been the instigators of most race riots—but it also touches the middle class liberal, for example in his unwillingness to expose his children to predominantly Negro schools, and therefore to predominantly lower-class education. To be sure, there is also fear of Negro violence and fascination with Negro sexuality, but these feelings differ only in degree from those held, say, a generation ago by middle-class Anglo-Saxon about Southern and Eastern European low-income people. . . .

Color is of course a more lasting mark of lower-class status than ethnicity but it is not an intrinsic one, and it need not be a permanent one. If Negroes could obtain the same occupational and educational opportunities as whites, then Negro life would eventually take on more of the same middle-class characteristics, and this in turn would reduce the association of fear and hatred with color. Color itself would not disappear, of course, but once other differences are reduced, it would be much less noticed.

Equality of opportunity is easier advocated than obtained, especially since the demand for unskilled labor, by which the European immigrant escaped from the lower class, has virtually disappeared today. The drastic changes in the economy and social structure which are necessary to reduce inequality are resisted by whites not only to maintain their racial dominance, but also by the widespread unwillingness to use the government as an agent of social change, and by the inability of Negroes to generate the political power to force such changes. . . .

The proper extension of educational and occupational opportunity may thus take a much longer time than justice demands, but despite all the negative trends, I am still hopeful that someday Negroes will become part of the middle class.

Once economic assimilation is a reality, and class based differences in behavior vanish so that color can no longer mean class difference, intermarriage is likely to take place as well. Even so, it will be the last step in the process of social assimilation, and by then, American society will probably be so different from today's that the twisted sexual and other feelings which the races now hold toward each other will be washed away. Under such conditions, the term miscegenation will of course be as inappropriate as it is now for marriages between whites and orientals, even though these unions were considered unthinkable a generation ago.

But widespread Negro-white intermarriage is so far off in time that to think of it as a solution, rather than as the end-product, is not only irrelevant, but likely to deflect attention from the more immediate need for the reduction of economic and political inequality. Moreover, such proposals could easily play into the hands of those defenders of the status quo who use the white fears aroused by miscegenation as an excuse for resisting the extension of more basic opportunities.

HERBERT J. GANS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz has written on a highly-charged subject with extraordinary skill, heart, and perception. I think that this essay will be referred to for years by the people involved in this important matter.

HAROLD U. RIBALOW

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As a serious essay pretending to shed light on a crucial question, Norman Podhoretz's article is juvenile, pedestrian, and even dangerous. I cannot help seeing the bewildered faces of thousands of Southern Jews, already carrying a heavy burden of stress and anxiety, when they are confronted with this article by their equally harassed white, gentile neighbors. . . . Mr. Podhoretz should know that no serious student of the Negro problem can accept the glib cliché that "all Negroes hate whites" and that "all whites hate Negroes." As a Jew, he should know that assimilation among Jews has been going on for centuries, especially in Germany, without producing the slightest mitigation of German hatred and intolerance against the Jew. Why then does he think

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that the Negro counterpart of assimilation, miscegenation, will work here in the United States? . . .

Does Mr. Podhoretz really believe that the average Southerner is concerned with the Negro's skin, or is racism again rather a convenient device with which Southern political demagogues exploit the underprivileged poor whites to their own advantage by offering them the Negro as a scapegoat? In other words, if Mr. Podhoretz had been willing to consult other authorities besides Mr. Baldwin, he would have found political and economic factors more crucial and definitive in Negro-white relations than the racial issue.

Most distressing of the absurdities in Mr. Podhoretz's article is his failure to draw on the only rationale for the improvement of Negro-white relations, and Christian-Jewish, as well. The philosophical and human case for the end of racism is in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Golden Rule. It is from these sources that millions of Americans—Negro and white, Christian and Jew—draw the courage, hope and, faith that the injustice toward the Negro will be undone. . . .

Finally, Mr. Podhoretz's essay suffers from the liberal confusion that every human problem has a "solution"—final and ultimate, despite the evidence of human history that no such final solution has ever existed. Only the Nazis and similar individuals ever come up with ultimate solutions. Realistic Americans . . . optimistically look for substantial progress in the Negro's position, not for final solutions. . . .

DAVID ANTMAN
Forest Hills, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I, too, have become bored and irritated by the pedestrian level on which the Negro problem continues to be discussed, and it was a great joy to read Norman Podhoretz's article for its refreshingly honest comment on the subject.

ROBERT GUTMAN
Director of Research
The Urban Studies Center
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Norman Podhoretz, "My Negro Problem—And Ours," had a good deal of force and honesty to it, and it was a serious attempt to confront the white liberal's dilemma in terms that take into account the injuries to both parties. The ending was another matter, however. I have no quarrel with miscegenation as a matter of individual choice, but I can't see it solving any of the problem which the article so seriously attempts to discuss. In places like South Africa and the Deep South where miscegenation has been widely (albeit covertly) practiced, the problem of color has only intensified; the man of color is always the outsider, even if he only happens to be a hybrid, not a pure strain. . . . If he cared to, the Jew in America could adopt gentile habits and a gentile name. But how can the Negro? His "facelessness" is the facelessness of the black man in a white society which does not recognize the ambiguities of mixed strains. . . .

DICK ELMAN
Public Affairs Director
WBAI-fm
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was greatly moved in reading "My Negro Problem—And Ours." Its frankness is disarming. I shall not pretend that my hair did not rise several times at the thought of some of the things Mr. Podhoretz reports about his treatment by Negro boys: but who started it? I kept thinking—isn't it the white adult who first decided to keep everything to himself and despise the Negro? How else could Negro boys behave? Isn't the huge guilt the white man's entirely? When the temperature was down I thought my emotional states were due to the fact that I am a South African Negro, which says much. We still come back to Mr. Podhoretz's "awkward" question, "How could the Negroes in my neighborhood have regarded the whites across the street and around the corner as jailers? . . . . As for white hatred of the Negro, how could guilt have had anything to do with it?" Is the physical fact of color not the all-potent thing after all in these relationships? . . .

At one point I wondered why Mr. Podhoretz seemed to think that integration necessarily had as its ultimate or inevitable aim the preservation of the Negro race as a protected minority. But he offers an answer to the dilemma—quite relieving—*miscegenation*. I just cannot see how a nation can continue to cheat itself into thinking that it can go on happily ever after merely because it is a physical mixture of races and put off indefinitely the day when it will be a chemical compound, like the

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Brazilian phenomenon. I can see this as the only solution for South Africa.

I am rather skeptical of James Baldwin's assertion that all Negroes hate whites. Besides, this is neither here nor there. Isn't it the antithesis of the equally absurd statement, "I like Negroes" or "I like Italians"? . . . I do not know the racial scene in America sufficiently to say Baldwin is wrong. But it does seem that he is ignoring dynamic person-to-person relationships which are all the time forming and breaking up and forming. I can quite appreciate that, as he says, color is a political thing, and therefore generates vicious and overwhelming group attitudes, and such person-to-person relationships become irrelevant, unimportant. And then, as Negroes, we tell ourselves that we ought all to be hating every white man.

Finally, it is brave and wise for COMMENTARY to want to publish articles like "My Negro Problem—And Ours." It is important that we should purge ourselves of the complexes Mr. Podhoretz gestures at; and how else can we do this than by knowing them for what they are?

EZEKIEL MPHAHLELE
Congrès pour la Liberté de la Culture
Paris, France

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Podhoretz's examination of the "Negro problem" is brave, and eloquent, and—as he would probably not deny—dreadfully confused.

Children are remarkably intense creatures, strange and revelatory; children grow into adults, and the process of growth necessarily shapes the end product. But a child's understanding of himself and his world, his inability to relate one phenomenon to another with even a reasonable semblance of objectivity, makes for a fantastic distortion in his perspective. To carry such distortions forward, and then to attempt adult-world generalizations on such a wildly askew basis, cannot be more than of limited utility. Mr. Podhoretz was tormented by Negroes as a child, and hated; bravely, he admits that he hates still. . . . But even if he has some reason to maintain his hatred, living "on the upper west side of Manhattan," why does he maintain it so unchanged? He would be in exactly the same danger—no less, no more—walking through a white waterfront neighborhood at night, dressed in his uniform of fairly prosperous respectability. . . . What he felt in childhood, what *they* felt then, is not crucial, not any more. Not even helpful, indeed—one draws passion and irrationality from such childhood remembrances, and one is relieved of their burden, but understanding must be sought elsewhere. . . .

There are more millions of people in the U.S.—white and black alike—than Mr. Podhoretz or any other adult will ever be called upon to deal with, face-to-face. The situations in which those people live are of course in part personal ones, but not in largest part. . . . We live in an incredibly complex world. Life can be pushed at, and affected, at an incredible multiplicity of points. If an urban, liberal, white Jew sends his children to a private school, rather than to the racially-mixed local public school, that hurts long-run Negro-white relations. But if he also—*surely* in good measure from guilt!—gives his support, financial and social, to the NAACP or to CORE, it may be that the net effect of his actions is beneficial rather than hurtful. It may be, further, that the two aspects of the one individual are deeply dependent one on the other, and that, for example, progress made by Negro action groups may in turn cause a raising of Negro educational levels and thereby create less pressure for panicked withdrawal to non-public education. Nothing, not even the Negroes and the whites themselves, is all black and white.

BURTON RAFFEL
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Podhoretz's article on the Negro problem is penetrating and knowledgeable, and its candor puts us all in his debt. I hope that it will arouse troubled thought, not just rationalization and piety. Three comments come to my mind.

First, I have the impression that a special intensity of hatred is building up in certain Negro quarters toward the middle-class liberal white. There is an element of felt betrayal. It is the feeling of betrayal that arouses the intensest of hates in all human relationships, and how else can the Negro feel but betrayed when he notes in the white liberal the signs of aversion (residential, educational, and, in a way that he never felt in the old South, physiological) that he had been led to believe were the stigmata of reactionaries only. Expecting nothing anyhow from the reactionary, the Negro is not likely to respond to him with the same knife-like rancor that goes to the liberal—who has wooed the Negro with words and laws, and then left him. It

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would be hard to imagine a better recipe for lasting hate than the present combination of expectation and rebuff. I am convinced that Black Muslimism is more a reaction to white liberalism than it is to old-line segregationism.

Second, I agree with Mr. Podhoretz that the Negro problem, as he and James Baldwin pose it, is not going to be settled until color disappears. . . . Both the Negro leader and the white liberal have usually protested that talk of intermarriage was a red herring. Opponents of civil rights have always said warningly that economic and social equality once begun must lead to intermarriage. If I understand Mr. Podhoretz he is saying hopefully that intermarriage once begun might lead to social and economic equality. I can think of various social mechanisms of racial intermingling in history —concubinage, marriage by force, by arrangement, romance—but none, unhappily, that apply at the present time, given the tragically contradictory legal and psychological conditions attending the Negro problem.

Third, I would like to propose that we banish the word integration. Apart from its unexceptional mathematical meaning, it is a semantic blob, a non-word. . . . Where else in the history of human relationships has this awful word been used? Women's rights? Jew and Gentile? Catholic and Protestant? Nowhere, to the best of my knowledge, and nowhere is where the word belongs.

What is to replace it? I take my stand on one thing alone: citizenship. Citizenship is not a semantic blob. It is as hard and clear as a diamond. It is the noblest word in the history of Western polity. Perhaps, just perhaps, if we concentrate on citizenship as the end, forgetting about the non-word, integration, we will put ourselves in a few decades at least where Catholic-Protestant and Jew-Gentile relationships have been put. These relationships, the Lord knows, are far from perfect; they add to the human condition. But few need be reminded of how far we have come.

ROBERT A. NISBET
Chancellor
University of California
Riverside, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have been a reader of and subscriber to Commentary for the past twelve years. During that time I have never read an article of such low intellectual caliber as "My Negro Problem—And Ours."

The article is offensive to any Jew who has had any association with Jewish tradition. Such a Jew is told in effect that because he helped to keep Jewish identity alive, he must bear part of the responsibility for the annihilation of six million Jews. This is as logical as telling a victim of a murder that he must bear some responsibility for his own murder because he was still alive at the time of his murder.

The article is offensive to any Negro. In effect, the Negro is told he has no past worth looking back at and no future, except his escape from his past by intermarriage. I wonder how many eminent Negro personages were consulted before the conclusions on intermarriage were reached. . . .

ISRAEL W. KIRSHENBAUM
Brooklyn, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

May I thank you profoundly for "My Negro Problem—And Ours"—a piece which needed writing and which Mr. Podhoretz wrote beautifully? . . .

I believe, however, that Mr. Podhoretz draws the wrong conclusions to reach the right answer. Differences in skin color are handicaps for the minority groups. . . . We are decades away from erasing these artificial barriers between man and man. But the tide is turning toward the procurement of equal rights—political and economic—in favor of the colored races. . . .

HARRY SCHNEIDERMAN
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

"My Negro Problem—And Ours" is one of the most honest efforts of real soul-searching in this whole business of prejudice that I have seen in a long time.

CONSTANCE CURRY
Director
Southern Student Human Relations Project
US National Student Association
Atlanta, Georgia

To the Editor of Commentary:

Norman Podhoretz's piece is a real landmark and if I had a Pulitzer Prize to give, he'd have it.

GILBERT A. HARRISON
Editor-in-chief
The *New Republic*
Washington, D.C.

[*Correspondence on "My Negro Problem—And Ours" will be continued in forthcoming issues.*]

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Hatred and Germany

To the Editor of Commentary:

The anti-German bias of Elie Wiesel's article ["An Appointment With Hate," December, 1962] is easily justified and need not be repudiated. But as Elie Wiesel finds no shelter from his pure hate I, as a young German, know he cannot expect pure feelings of guilt from my generation. A young German who is silent about concentration camps is not necessarily uninformed and unconcerned. There are things to which talk does not lend itself easily. . . . What happened is beyond anger.

Were the lines clearly drawn, it would be easy to hate. But it just is not the case that all evil or crime is attributable to Germans. As a boy I myself experienced scenes similar to those Mr. Wiesel has witnessed, in which non-Germans were the offenders and the adults around me, all Germans naturally, often risked their lives to ward off evil. Many of my peers are still haunted by the traumatic experiences of their childhood supplied so generously by the deliberate bombings of civilians, for instance, or the march of the Red Army into Germany. Even the Americans, so proud of their long tradition of righteousness found it expedient to unleash a storm of fire over Japanese civilians on the mere chance of saving some of their soldiers' lives. . . .

Since the elimination of the German menace the world certainly does not prosper in peace. Genocide, a word which so heavily burdens our consciences today, is being scientifically planned. Eichmann's trains are no longer necessary. The means have been found to cremate people in their homes. Surely, the motivation is different but what more is there to say? Genocide is not a German invention either. Numbers 31 relates a ghastly instance. I realize that whatever I may say cannot alleviate the moral burden that the nation of which I am a citizen must bear. It is not intended to do so.

There is so much to be hated that hating needs to be qualified and conserved. Elie Wiesel has expressed this difficulty. But in the age of overkill it is equally difficult for my generation to feel guilty.

Joseph Meier

Boston, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . It is not easy to retain a point of view which is extremely unpopular, as is that expressed by Elie Weisel. . . . It is difficult to be alone, and the burden of being a conscience in an unpopular cause is a trying task. . . . I feel stronger for having read Mr. Wiesel's words.

The cause of "hate" is not considered good breeding, even among Jews. The businessmen travel by Lufthansa to Germany . . . the salesman improves his economic standing by buying and selling products "Made in West Germany" and it is unbelievable to hear the rationalizations which accompany the buying and displaying of a Volkswagen. . . . It is a far cry from the desperate state of mind of the Jewish community in the 1930's. . . .

Rabbi Leo Baeck, the late scholar and teacher, returned to Germany for a visit after the war. He was asked: "Dr. Baeck, do you condone Germany?" And Dr. Baeck answered, "This is not the question. The point is: can Germany condone itself?" Elie Wiesel has given us an accurate answer to this question also. . . .

(Rabbi) Robert L. Lehman

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

What did Mr. Wiesel expect in Germany? Had he never read any of the many reports on Germany before he set out on his trip of "discovery"? He is of course entirely at liberty—and it may be excusable—to hate *the* "Germans" or to dislike them, but is it really necessary to indulge in the self-glorification that Jews do not hate? Even if it were true—and, alas, how many Jews have I met who hate—it does not show good taste to put it in the naive way in which this article puts it. After all, Mr. Wiesel ends by asking the Jews ("every Jew") to hate ("virile" hate!) what *the* German (every German?) personifies.

Hans Kohn

University of Denver
Denver, Colorado

To the Editor of Commentary:

After the Jews were driven out of Spain in 1492, they never returned in any sizable numbers, and over the centuries only a small Jewish community has lived in that country. When the Jews were driven out of Germany, they went back in droves and contributed, inside and outside of Germany, to the "miracle" of Germany's recovery. Elie Wiesel went back, too, and his "Appointment with Hate" was a dismal failure.

At the moment that Elie Wiesel went to the German Consulate for a visa, he had to forego all his principles and to abandon all his resentments and hates. One cannot

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do business with Germany (as he does), one cannot play to a German audience (as he does) and pretend to hate them. The question for a Jew is simply this: What is more important—to have principles or to run with the crowd?

. . . If I were a German, I would only laugh at those foolish Jews who indulge in brotherly love and consider 15 years of Nazi tyranny wiped out by a flimsy excuse. For many survivors of the holocaust, it is not a question of being a Jew. It is much more difficult to remain a Jew.

ARNO HERZBERG

Newark, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for the superb article by Elie Wiesel. Except for one day in 1935, I have never been in Germany. I was very young then, but that one day in Berlin, and the next day on the train terrified me. . . . Now my young friends try to convince me that I am wrong to hate Germany. And I must say I've had moments when I thought they might be right. They are not.

That is why I feel that Mr. Wiesel's article, beautifully written and so carefully thought out, is so important. I thank you for it. We must not forget.

MARY MCCLINTOCK

Washingtonville, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read with interest Mr. Elie Wiesel's article . . . urging "every Jew" to "set apart a zone of hate—healthy, virile hate—for what the German personifies and for what persists in the German. To do otherwise would be a betrayal of the dead."

This kind of feeling is neither single nor personal. It is widely felt. . . .

The spectacle of Jews so facing Germany a generation after Hitler's advent provides an intriguing perspective on history by inviting a comparison with Jewish opinion as recently as the first World War when Germans were hailed as the avengers of Jewish suffering in Czarist Russia.

In 1914, the majority of Jews were pro-German, if only because anti-Russian. The people of the pogrom-ridden East actually "longed for the coming of the Germans as liberators," as Dr. Weizmann relates in his memoirs. Zionist leaders earnestly believed in a German victory, not from any wishful thinking (Dr. Weizmann avers) but because of convictions which "flowed from very deep sources." They "knew Germany, they spoke German, and they were vastly impressed by German achievement, German discipline, and German power." Dr. Weizmann himself was a devotee of the German mind, and when in 1913, he addressed the 11th Zionist Congress on the Hebrew University, he cited in conclusion a passage from one of the great bellwethers of German nationalism, Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The story continues through World War I. . . .

All of this now seems ancient history and much of it probably well nigh beyond belief. It is related not to extenuate the unutterable crimes which will stain the German name forever, but rather as one of those lessons which show that history is apt to play the least likely tricks. . . . How soon men will curse what once they blessed, and vice versa. Egypt was not always the land of the Ten Plagues and may well be ruled once more by the Pharaoh of Joseph. . . . The memory of the not very distant past should perhaps encourage a chastened sense of proportion and help to mitigate the torn and tattered passions which infest and too often vitiate the Jewish debate on Germany.

C. C. ARONSFELD

Harrow, Middlesex, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . My mother and brother perished in Auschwitz. I spent over two years in a number of German labor and concentration camps. The same holds for my wife and her mother. My father-in-law perished in a German labor camp in Estonia.

Mr. Wiesel, there are two ways of betraying the dead. One is to forget; the other is to elevate monolithic hatred to the level of a moral principle. The devil triumphed his mightiest triumph over human dignity at Auschwitz. The devil triumphs a horrid little triumph when he makes Mr. Wiesel ashamed of his inability to hate a woman simply because she is German, and when he gets him to urge us to hate "what the German personifies" and "what persists in the German." Replace "German" with "Jew" and you may realize what you are guilty of.

"The Torah bids us remember Amalek, not to hate it." A marvelous principle, indeed. I interpret it to mean that we had better stop nursing our impotent and utterly useless hate and think of how best to prevent another eruption of man's most monstrous propensity: self-elevation achieved by degradation of another.

ABE SHENITZER

Adelphi College
Garden City, New York

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To the Editor of Commentary:

It was an extraordinary experience to read Elie Wiesel's measured recounting of his "Appointment with Hate." It brings to light a simple but ironic fact: that most intelligent people tend to place the responsibility for remembering the German 20th century terror upon the Germans. To my knowledge, almost no one, except Mr. Wiesel, has underscored the essential naiveté of this position. The extra jab of pain one feels when reading of present-day German insensitivity . . . is perhaps due to our own wounded innocence.

The Germans, past and present, represent the full flowering of atavistic barbarism in our time. Our past relations with them are already painfully marked by a dangerous naiveté. Let us not dishonor the past or make the future even more uncertain by turning over the job of bearing witness to past horrors to those who have most to gain by forgetting. . . .

Daniel Stern

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

As a German Jew I am outraged by the . . . exhibition of venom, hatred, and malice in Elie Wiesel's article. Mr. Wiesel, by his own admission, spent but a few hours in the Federal Republic. Within the past seven years, I have spent four in Germany, and declare Wiesel's statements to be . . . unworthy even of civil discussion.

Wiesel advocates that every Jew should set apart a zone of hate for what the "German personifies." German Jews, regardless of their present citizenship, are by definition Germans; does Wiesel also suggest setting apart a "healthy, virile" hate for German Jews? . . .

The German people without exception, including former members and leaders of the Nazi party, are today bitterly ashamed and remorseful at the bestial manner in which Jews . . . were treated under Hitler. Jewish life is once again apparent in the Federal Republic of Germany; certainly the German government has done its utmost to further it. About 30,000 persons of Jewish religion presently reside in Germany, and many of them regard Germany as their homeland and fatherland.

While the American Jewish Committee and other defense organizations are engaged in combating anti-Jewish hatred and bigotry . . . Commentary feels called upon to disseminate the poison pen mentality evident in the Wiesel article. It stands to reason, that no German will gladly suffer this kind of collective condemnation. . . .

The late and sainted Rabbi Leo Baeck, who spent the war years in the hell of Nazi concentration camps, constantly warned against the un-Jewish attitude of hatred against Germany. I think it high time that Rabbi Baeck's admonition for reconciliation with German gentiles be taken seriously.

Klaus J. Hermann

Port Arthur, Ontario

To the Editor of Commentary:

In Commentary of December 1962, page 472, I found a notice that I had said: "Hitler was only the scourge of God to chastise His people." This is a complete misrepresentation of my opinion and a distortion of my expressions. I never said anything like this. My whole behavior in the "Nazi" time and afterwards proves exactly the contrary. I ask you for a correction soon. . . .

Heinrich Gruber

Dean, Evangelical Church
West Berlin

Mr. Wiesel *writes:*

In an article that appeared in the issue of *Christianity and Crisis* for April 30, 1962, the author, Rabbi Richard Rubenstein of Pittsburgh, describes an interview he had with Bishop Gruber on the theological meaning of the destruction of European Jewry. In the course of their talk, Bishop Gruber insisted repeatedly and at length upon an analogy between Hitler and Nebuchadnezzar, both seen as unwitting agents of God's purpose to chastise the Jews. I extend apologies to Bishop Gruber for having ascribed to him the literal citation from Isaiah II, which I cannot document. But the sense of the analogy, it would seem, is unmistakable. The Bishop did state: "At different times God uses different people as His whip against His own people, the Jews, but those whom He uses will be punished far worse than the people of the Lord. . . ."

Correction

The interviews with prominent Frenchmen referred to in Hans J. Morgenthau's article (March, p. 186) were mistakenly ascribed to President de Gaulle. These interviews were in fact held by Mr. Morgenthau.

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THE POLITICS OF TASTE

AGAINST THE AMERICAN GRAIN. By DWIGHT MACDONALD. *Random House. 427 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by STEVEN MARCUS

FOR YEARS now Dwight Macdonald has been firing off his gay and spirited salvos against the barbarians in our midst, and it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge a cumulative sense of indebtedness to him. It comes then as a disappointment to find that his essays on mass culture—collected in a volume entitled *Against the American Grain*—do not stand up on a second reading, that taken together they amount to something less impressive than when they were first read in various periodicals. Mr. Macdonald's prose is always clear and definite (and very often charmingly witty), but its clarity has been bought by simplification and its definiteness is without depth: it is the best two-dimensional prose now going, the prose of someone who has found what can be at any time the most convenient substitute for taking thought—a position.

Mr. Macdonald's position usually appears in historical form and can be briefly summarized as follows. In the past, under the dispensation of aristocratic and feudal societies, there was a traditional culture of art and thought which both served and expressed the privileged, educated social minority. Things started to go wrong at about 1750, and as a result of the economic, social, and political revolutions which then began and still continue, a second, or mass, culture was created. This culture is crude, vulgar, and mass-produced, and has exerted pressures of a harmful kind on high or traditional culture, at times even seeming to threaten its continued existence. By confusing traditional standards of value, by trying falsely to "democratize" culture, by making culture and art marketable commodities, it has produced an art that is "not just unsuccessful art. It is non-art. It is even anti-art," and a culture that is anti-culture. And if this were not bad enough, in recent years a still worse threat has come into being: middlebrow culture—or Midcult—bred from the "unnatural intercourse" of High Culture with Mass Culture. Midcult "pretends to respect the standards of High Culture while in fact it waters them down and vulgarizes them." It is a corruption of High Culture which has the advantage of being able "*to pass itself off as the real* thing." It is against the lords and owners of Midcult—and against the stewards of their non-excellence—that Mr. Macdonald's attacks are directed.

This thesis has a kind of neo-classic simplicity about it which is in accord with Mr. Macdonald's literary tastes and preferences. They too are neo-classic: he feels most at home in the literature and culture of the English 18th century and in the avant-garde writing of 1890–1930—the neo-classic period not only of the modern age but of Mr. Macdonald's own life-span. And we might add that Mr. Macdonald's essays express this thesis and these tastes in a suitably neo-classic way—to read them is to experience the meaning of the phrase "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed." Now, it would be an oversight not to recognize that the very limitations and confinements of this set of attitudes are at once the conditions of Mr. Macdonald's intellectual virtues, and that his best essays spring from them as fully as do his most radical simplifications. His classic demolitions of *The Syntopticon* and of the third edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary* could only have been written by someone who knew exactly what he believed, and whose un-

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shakeable clarity of conviction acted to release the critical energies that made these essays possible. Yet clarity of conviction can be perilously close to prejudice, which is itself a species of false clarity; often Mr. Macdonald mistakes his own prejudices for judgments of a different order, and this in turn leads to the substitution of opinion-mongering for argument. For example, in his long essay, "Masscult and Midcult," he chooses to discuss Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea,* Thornton Wilder's *Our Town,* Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.,* and Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body* as instances of Midcult writing. But if anything is clear about this list—or at least so it seems to this reviewer—it is that Hemingway's work does not belong in it. *The Old Man and the Sea* is a failure by a writer whose work belongs to a different class than the work of the three with whom Mr. Macdonald has included him. And this makes Hemingway's lapses into vulgarity and coarseness of feeling more interesting and more complex than the mere vulgarity and coarseness of middlebrowism. At least such a view might be argued. But Mr. Macdonald doesn't argue—at any rate not in this instance—he merely asserts. The assertion is supported only by what must be called Mr. Macdonald's taste; and for him taste is largely determined by his sense of style.

More than he is anything else, Mr. Macdonald is a critic of style. To be precise, he is a critic of prose style, and he tends habitually to regard writing with the jaundiced but good-humored eye of a teacher of Freshman Composition. In his unwavering regard for the standard, traditional virtues of English prose, Mr. Macdonald takes his place along with Hazlitt and Orwell as one of the caretakers of the language. Yet his sense of prose is less adequate than that of either of them and tends to be merely standard in its insistence upon what can be thought of as the externalities of prose (indicating again both the strengths and shortcomings of the neo-classic temperament of mind). This deficiency of inwardness is characteristic of Mr. Macdonald's writing in general, and we find it first of all in his own prose. Here is a typical passage:

> Lots of writers are fascinated by evil and write copiously about it, but they are bored by virtue; this not only limits their scope but prevents a satisfactory account of evil, which can no more be comprehended apart from good than light can be comprehended apart from darkness.

What is wrong with this passage is not its clarity or simplicity but the absence from it of any sense that clarity and simplicity are in this context misplaced and irrelevant. Unlike the best clear critical prose—one thinks of the style of T. S. Eliot or of Edmund Wilson—Mr. Macdonald's rarely carries with its clarity the sense of difficulty overcome or of problems so complex that they cannot be reduced to complacent neatness of formulation. (Complacent neatness of formulation, one must observe, is a tendency in Mr. Macdonald's writing that his years on the *New Yorker* have unfortunately helped to solidify.)

Mr. Macdonald's criticism of other writers almost always focuses on their prose. Sometimes this works very well; sometimes it amounts to an evasion. For example, he blows up Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* by demonstrating how its barbarous style is inseparable from its philistine attitudes. But then he tries to do the same thing with Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution,* stating that Williams "isn't good at generalizing and this is shown by his appalling prose style—for one cannot conceive of an idea apart from the words in which it is expressed; at least, I can't." Simply substitute for Williams the names of Jeremy Bentham, John Dewey, or Thorstein Veblen (not to mention writers in other languages) and the inadequacy of this idea stands revealed. And at another point he asserts that it is a "false distinction" to think that a book can be "important because of what it says, apart from how it says it." This is exactly the kind of thing one says to freshmen in the hope that they will attend to their own prose but with the awareness that it is only a partial truth. For the fact is that many important writers—even including novelists—have had bad or awkward styles. And perhaps the chief fault of Mr. Macdonald's criticism is the way in which he consistently regards ideas as if they were aesthetic objects, identifying validity with felicity. Even John Keats, the first of the intellectual aesthetes, was finally forced to entertain the idea that poetry might not be "so fine a thing as phi-

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losophy—For the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth."

This confusion of beauty with truth is nowhere so evident as in Mr. Macdonald's essay on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. With a masterly thoroughness he compares the new version with the King James version and shows how the older translation is in point of literary quality superior in every way. "To make the Bible readable in the modern sense," he writes, "means to flatten out, tone down, and convert into tepid expository prose what in the King James version is wild, full of awe, poetic, and passionate." This is of course so, but at no point in the essay does Mr. Macdonald evince the slightest awareness that for several millions of people the Bible is the living Word of God, or that such things as salvation and immortality are abiding realities for the largest part of mankind. And he mourns the passing of the King James version because it was "a great literary monument to which, *because it also happens to have a religious function,* practically everybody, no matter how unliterary or meagerly educated, was at some time exposed. . . ." The italics are mine. "As it enriches us to leave beautiful old buildings standing when they are no longer functional," he continues, "or to perform Shakespeare without watering his poetry down to prose, so with the Bible." So with the Bible only if it matters no more than *Chatsworth* or *Love's Labour's Lost*. Here Mr. Macdonald ceases to be a literary or cultural critic and functions as a mere aesthete.

In the end, his objections to mass culture and modern society are also aesthetic—that is to say, Mr. Macdonald regards society as essentially a work of art. This is the classic conservative position, and a respectable one; but it must be added that Mr. Macdonald is a conservative only in cultural matters and has not taken to himself the other beliefs which add substance if not final strength to the traditional conservative attitude. He has no use for religion (and as I have tried to show, no sensibility or even appreciation of it), and his politics, having run their course through Trotskyism, anarchism, and pacifism, now appear to be utterly neutral. Furthermore, his sense of history—crucial to the best conservative thought—is woefully underdeveloped. At one point, for example, he asserts that it should be our aim "to restore the cultural distinctions that have become increasingly blurred since the industrial revolution, and that out of such attempts to do this as the 1890–1930 avant-garde movement . . . has come whatever is alive in our culture today." The innocence of historical fact that such a statement reveals is itself surprising enough; what is even more surprising is Mr. Macdonald's innocence of knowing that one can't, in anything like the sense he means, restore a thing—not even the good old times of the avant-garde and one's intellectual youth. And even granting the possibility of such a cultural restoration, how could it take place without a prior restoration of the social, political, and economic arrangements out of which that culture grew and upon whose existence the existence of that culture almost wholly depended? The truth is that the criticism of mass culture involves a good deal more than aesthetic sense, or taste; it involves firm judgments of a moral and social kind—judgments that, while not ultimately disconnected from judgments of taste, are not identical with them and often must violate them. The idea of equality, for instance, is an aesthetic offense; it has nothing of the charm and grace and style of the ideas of hierarchy, degree, and inherited distinction. Something like this can also be said of the ideas of change, conflict, and compromise as opposed to the ideas of permanence, order, and completeness of form. Yet it would be worse than folly to allow our social and moral judgments to depend on such considerations. There are, we must from time to time remind ourselves, more important values than the values of art.

JEWS, TEMPORAL & TIMELESS

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL JEW. By ARTHUR A. COHEN. *Pantheon Books. 326 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by MARVIN FOX

IN THIS book, Arthur Cohen asks that Judaism and the Jewish people be restored to their historic role as God's witnesses on earth. In his view "the rediscovery of the supernatural vocation of the Jew is the

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turning-point of modern Jewish history . . . for the Jewish people is not a fact of history but an article of faith." Mr. Cohen devotes most of the book to an exposition of major figures in Jewish thought from Solomon ibn Verga in the early 16th century to our contemporary Will Herberg. He reads Jewish intellectual history, especially from the 18th century on, as a history of progressive secularization. In our time, however, this trend has been somewhat arrested. That certain contemporary thinkers have returned to a conception of the Jew as one who stands in a special covenanted relationship with God, Mr. Cohen feels, is the most exciting, significant, and hopeful development of recent Jewish history.

Moses Mendelssohn is, in certain respects, the unwitting villain of the drama. In spite of his outer conformity to Jewish religious discipline, Mendelssohn (in Mr. Cohen's version) laid the foundations for secularization by cutting the historic tie between the Jewish faith and the Jewish people. The tendency was carried further by Leopold Zunz, Heinrich Graetz and other spiritual descendents of Mendelssohn, on the one hand, and by Moses Hess and the Zionists, on the other.

In their concern to "normalize" the Jew —the Zionists by restoring him to his own land, the proponents of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* by integrating him into Western culture—both groups rejected the supernatural dimensions of Jewish existence and thereby robbed Judaism of its most important distinguishing characteristic. Even Samson Raphael Hirsch, the great leader of Orthodox Judaism in Germany, fails by Mr. Cohen's standards; though he affirmed the supernatural dimension of Jewish existence, he erred in disengaging Jewish from general culture.

Mr. Cohen stresses two themes repeatedly. First, he holds that what he calls the "natural" Jew, the Jew defined by the ordinary categories of history and sociology, must be integrated with the "supernatural" Jew. Neither aspect of Jewish existence is sufficient when taken alone; nor can we understand the Jewish past or be confident about the Jewish future unless we restore this unified perspective. Second, Mr. Cohen insists that Judaism can fulfill its proper end only so long as it functions in an intimate relation with world history: ". . . the truth of Judaism has relevance and bearing upon the destiny of mankind. . . . The Jew can no longer afford the luxury of isolated sanctity, cut off and disinclined to share the history and time of his environment." Mr. Cohen's strongest criticism of most modern Jewish thinkers is that they have neglected to affirm one or both of these two points.

THUS, HERMANN COHEN, in struggling to identify the Jewish with the German spirit, made God the supreme moral teacher, but never came to terms with the Jewish belief in a God who is an "autonomous person." Nor did Leo Baeck—though he saw clearly that Judaism in contemporary society had to confront Christianity—really face up to the supernatural base of all Jewish existence. Instead he assigned to Judaism a primary concern with the ordering of human ends. Even Rosenzweig and Buber fail to meet Mr. Cohen's demand for an adequate synthesis of these two elements within our tradition. Rosenzweig stresses the supernatural Jew at the expense of the natural, while Buber's natural Jew struggles unsuccessfully to confront the God who is beyond nature.

If Rosenzweig and Buber do not satisfy Mr. Cohen's quest, then we can be certain that Mordecai Kaplan is beyond all hope. For Kaplan is a naturalist whose God is "anything the community, the folk, the civilization defines Him to be." Mr. Cohen grants that Kaplan has fought assimilation, struggled to give vitality to Jewish culture, and devoted enormous effort to redefining Jewish belief in a way that would make it acceptable to our scientifically-minded contemporaries. But he finds Kaplan's medicine worse than the disease it would cure. For "the adjustment of the Jew to the natural conditions of his environment divests him of the only weapon, his supernatural vocation, which allows him to survive what he must always survive—terrestrial history. The moment the civilization of the Jew is refashioned in order to accommodate his role in natural history the terms of his eclipse have been granted. The natural Jew as such has, we believe, no hope."

Mr. Cohen claims to have learned much from two contemporary American Jewish thinkers, Abraham Joshua Heschel and

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Will Herberg. He holds that Heschel has illuminated the supernatural vocation of the Jew, but has not met in a convincing way the challenges of modern philosophy and science: Mr. Cohen wants not only affirmations of faith or religious rhetoric but arguments which will penetrate disbelief and irreligion. From Will Herberg, Mr. Cohen has learned to appreciate "the all-importance of history," a stress which recurs throughout the book. He understands theology, in fact, as "the science of sacred history" which "sets itself but one task: to apprehend and interpret the presence of God in time and history." Nevertheless, while many of the central points in Herberg's thought are here echoed, "Will Herberg cannot be a satisfactory Jewish thinker," because in his thought he transcends both Judaism and Christianity, "losing the real particularity which is the history of each."

MR. COHEN provides us with an analysis of modern Jewish thought which, though tendentious, is often remarkably perceptive. His main interest, however, has not been to write a brief history of modern Jewish thought. He has sought, rather, to use the subject as a foil for the development of his own ideas.

Basically, this book is another product of the renewed Jewish effort at self-understanding. Mr. Cohen is concerned with understanding what it means to be a Jew, and even more with making sense out of his own existence as a Jew. Though he criticizes Heschel for not providing an arsenal of persuasive arguments, he himself begins with a personal confession of faith, or, as he calls it, "a statement of existential dogma." The strand that unites the various elements in his dogmatic statement is the belief in the essentially supernatural character of the Jewish vocation. This dogma is primary. It is not argued, since, as he tells us, "what *I* say here *I* must believe, because without it there is nothing I consider *ultimately* relevant or meaningful to believe." We cannot quarrel with a personal confession, nor deny any man the right to make sense out of his world in his own way. However, when private dogmas are published they become subject to criticism, for they are clearly intended to persuade others. They make a claim for themselves as normative. Moreover, dogmas which seek to define Jewishness must be judged in the light of evidence provided by classic Jewish sources. How does Mr. Cohen's dogma stand up by these criteria?

A limited authenticity it certainly has, given the fact that it leads to a plea for the restoration of that Jewish vocation which the tradition has faithfully elaborated since the Covenant of Sinai. The crucial point is not whether Cohen is right or wrong, but whether the enterprise of Jewish theology, as he conceives it, is possible. Can one speak of "Jewish theology, rightly understood," without falling into a trap? Every Jewish theology arises at a particular time and place and is, in part, a reaction to a particular cultural context. Mr. Cohen's book, likewise, is the product of contemporary concerns and the contemporary religious situation, and like the thought of his predecessors his theology must also prove partial and incomplete. Thus he wisely stresses the importance of the supernatural Jew at a time when naturalistic interpretations of Judaism still dominate. But was not Kaplan responding equally to his estimate of the Jewish environment of thirty years ago when he made his great plea for Judaism *without* supernaturalism?

Perhaps Judaism has never given a primary place to systematic theology precisely because such systems are necessarily reactions to particular cultural circumstances. Over the centuries Jewish intellectual energy has instead been devoted primarily to the Halacha. A Jew was defined and defined himself by halachic norms, which achieved a kind of transcultural permanence. Jewish philosophy and theology were for the most part rooted in and related to halachic literature. I would suggest that the most striking symptom of that very secularization Mr. Cohen is protesting is the fact that hardly any of the thinkers he discusses sees an organic relationship between Jewish theology and the principles of Halacha: nor does Mr. Cohen himself note any such relationship. It is not enough to talk about the supernatural vocation of the Jewish people. We must be concerned with the forms of human behavior that objectify and give substance to this vocation.

Were he more deeply rooted in the ha-

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lachic tradition, Mr. Cohen might also see more value in the efforts expended for naturalist Jewish survival. "All adjustments and rationalizations," he tells us, "are designed to insure that the natural Jew will survive, even though the supernatural Jew may perish. What concerns us, however, is that the supernatural Jew shall survive." Halachic teaching, on the contrary, places enormous importance on the survival of every individual Jew, no matter how far he falls short of the Jewish ideal. *"Dos pintele Yid"* which remains, however deeply buried, in every Jewish heart still constitutes a saving remnant. The tradition shares Mr. Cohen's concern for the survival of the supernatural Jew, but it is fully aware that existential confrontation with God is not the only way to such survival. In each act of charity, in every expression of human and humane concern, however secularized, there continues to be some element of that supernatural vocation. Even if contemporary Jews have survived as Jews primarily through their philanthropy, they have not lost their vocation completely, for Jewish doctrine has always held that a straight path leads from love of man to love of God.

Perhaps what is basically wrong is that the categories "natural" and "supernatural" have no proper ground in Jewish thinking. The Jew, *qua* Jew, has never been able to admit this distinction. If all the world is God's creation, if He is the Lord of both nature and history, then every dismembering of human existence into natural and supernatural is artificial. The Jew is the historic witness to this faith, having been commanded to bring heaven and earth together. Mr. Cohen pleads repeatedly for this very unification of the natural and the supernatural Jew. He sees clearly enough that there cannot be one without the other—but what he tends to forget is that no natural Jew exists, in his sense. Whatever is identifiably Jewish, however it may struggle to make itself "natural," inevitably fails to shake off the "supernatural" element. This is why the Halacha places such great value on the fulfillment of a *mitzvah* even when done without proper intention. If the act is performed out of any Jewish motivation whatsoever, it transcends its own natural boundaries and becomes a step toward the proper Jewish vocation.

In short, until Mr. Cohen succeeds in incorporating the halachic tradition into the suggestive theological framework he has already built, he will stand at the periphery, rather than at the center, of Jewish thought. He has not yet shown the way to that very synthesis of the natural and the supernatural Jew for which he argues. For this he needs the system of Halacha—the only instrument that Jewish faith has for standing simultaneously in the worlds of the temporal and the eternal.

ECONOMIC THINKING

MAIN CURRENTS IN MODERN ECONOMICS: ECONOMIC THOUGHT SINCE 1870. By BEN B. SELIGMAN. *Free Press. 887 pp. $11.75.*

Reviewed by C. E. AYRES

OF ALL the social sciences, economics has suffered most from the incompatibility of 18th-century conceptions and 20th-century mathematical techniques. With its parade of simultaneous equations, modern economics seems more rigorous than its sister disciplines, toward which therefore economists incline to condescend. But what economics has gained in rigor it has lost in relevance. As one recent commentator has remarked, when economics is a science it is not economics, and when it is economics it is not a science.

These paradoxes derive from the conception of the economy as "the obvious and simple system of natural liberty" which we associate with the name of its classic expositor, Adam Smith. Galbraith has suggested that his conception reflects the scarcity of that day. Certainly the Founding Fathers did not foresee the great affluence that the industrial revolution was to bring to later generations; but what they did see was the burgeoning wealth of nations in their day, and their inquiry was directed at the nature and causes of what an earlier writer had called "England's treasure."

Rejecting the then current notion that nations get rich by robbing each other (Adam Smith called it the beggar-my-neighbor, or stud-poker, theory), they based their system on what was seen as a neat co-

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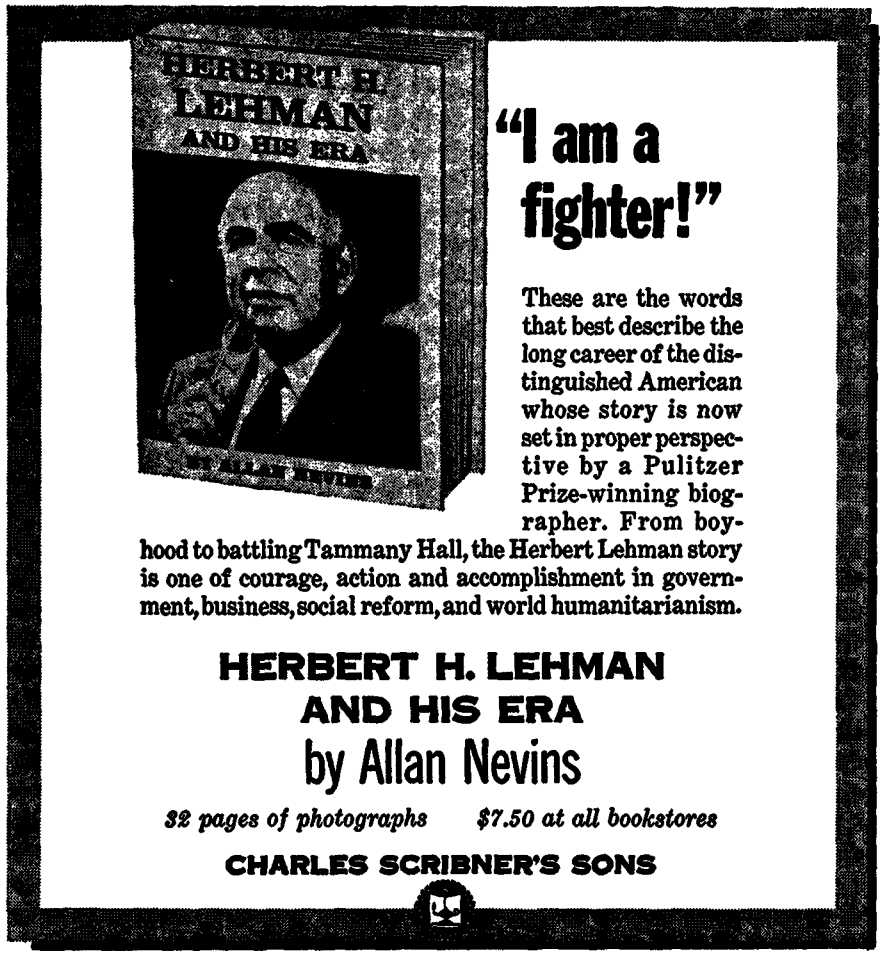
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incidence between individual enterprise and the general welfare. The presumption was that each of us, though intent only upon his own gain, is, in Adam Smith's most celebrated words, "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which [is] no part of his intention." Hence the best thing public policy can do to promote the general welfare is to leave us alone.

This idea was, and still is, an immensely attractive one, and so has dominated the economic thinking of the Western world ever since, becoming what Galbraith called "the conventional wisdom" of our society. It was attractive to academic minds because it uses the apparatus of market prices, an apparatus so complicated as to absorb the life-long efforts of several generations of scholars. To the business community and the general public its appeal was even greater, since, translated into the policy of *laissez faire*, it appeared to fit perfectly with the age-old political struggle of free people against tyranny. Furthermore, the rapid growth that followed from the industrial revolution seemed to provide a clincher for the efficacy of the theory, so that by the middle of the 19th century the classical tradition reigned supreme.

But in the later decades of the century the economic picture began to change. Monopolies were beginning to spread over the economy and to overturn the assumption, necessary to classical theory, of a perfect competition. Knights of Labor and Populists, along with other new movements, began to disturb the peace; Edward Bellamy and Henry George were plotting out their seductive utopias; and a group of young rebels were organizing the American Eco-

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nomic Association. I do not mean to exaggerate the influence of these developments. Many writers have noted that in the decade after the First World War certain dissident ideas, and especially those of the "institutionalists," seemed to be offering a very real challenge to the Established Tradition. In 1924, when Rex Tugwell edited a book of essays by members of this group he did not scruple to call it *The Trend of Economics.*

This trend may have been responsible for a unique feature of the present book. Mr. Seligman sets forth the development of "Economic Thought since 1870" (the book's subtitle) in what to the profession is a highly unorthodox way—by beginning with the German historical school, the socialists (Marxist and otherwise), and the institutionalists. Now, 1870 is a standard date in the history of economic thought: the conventional dividing line between "classical" and "neo-classical" theory. If the question "What does the date 1870 signify in the history of economic thought?" were asked of Ph.D. candidates in their oral examination, every one of them would answer: "It marks the beginning of the neo-classical period." Nevertheless Mr. Seligman begins his survey of *Main Currents* not with the central tradition, but with the developments described above, entitled "The Revolt against Formalism." Then returning to the neo-classical movement, which he calls "The Reaffirmation of Tradition," he characterizes it as a response to Marxist criticism.

WHETHER or not neo-classical marginal utility theory was formulated in answer to the socialists, it certainly was not, as Mr. Seligman's treatment might seem to suggest, a rejoinder to Thorstein Veblen. However, the decade between the First World War and the Great Depression was in general a time of stock-taking. One might have expected then that the crash of 1929 and the years of prostration which followed would have put a permanent crimp into classical theory. During those years economists discovered that even very imperfectly competitive markets may be in equilibrium. It was in the 1930's, too, that the "Keynesian revolution" took place. Since equilibrium had always been the holy-of-holies of "the obvious and simple system"—the modern form of the medieval doctrine of "just price"—the discovery that rankly non-competitive markets may nevertheless be in equilibrium might have threatened to destroy our faith in the whole theory of the market-guided economy; and so also might Keynes's discovery that unemployment is not inconsistent with an equilibriated market—a "discovery" that millions of individual people were making on their own account.

But to expect that economic crises by themselves could overthrow time-honored doctrine is to fail to do justice to the mental agility of scholars. Price equilibrium may have no moral significance; but like art, or "pure" science, it may be loved for its own sake. Thus, as it turned out, the abstract theory of price—the construction of quasi-mathematical "models" of hypothetical market situations—received an enormous boost from the discovery that it is capable of application to an infinite variety of market situations. These models, we are told, are the "tools" of economic analysis, tools too fine and precise to be used in cutting bread, or even Keynes's celebrated cake.

Meantime, however, the employment theory we associate with the name of Keynes, though many others have held similar ideas, has vastly altered economic practice. Among economists it has produced a split between "micro" theory (of market equilibria) and what might be identified as economic grand strategy, manifest, for example, in the Full Employment Act of 1946 and in the devising and use of such statistical tools as the Gross National Product.

And so economists are today busier than ever, but at different tasks. Some of them are engaged in what Mr. Seligman calls "The Thrust Toward Technique." In 1922, in keeping with the skeptical spirit of that decade, the famous economic historian Sir John Clapham charged that economic theorists were engaged in constructing "empty boxes"—empty of empirical content and devoid of practical significance and value. Today the image could be stretched to include the new mathematical theorists who seem to be constructing an infinite series of empty boxes, each cunningly designed to fit inside its predecessor, and none containing anything but more empty boxes.

On the other side, economists are being

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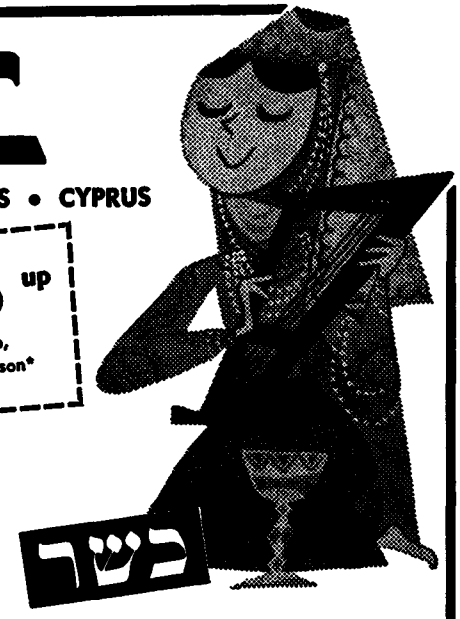

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pressed into service by government all the way from townships to the United Nations, by social agencies of every description, and of course by private businesses. More concrete information is being collected and the task of interpreting this mass of information is becoming more formidable with each passing year. It seems clear that "econometrics" and "macro" economics are here to stay.

Such is the scene that Mr. Seligman has undertaken to survey, and in so doing, he has produced by far the most extensive study anyone has made of the development of economic ideas in the last three generations. Indeed, both the dimensions and the complexity of the picture are much larger and more intricate than these few pages can suggest. The task of reducing such a story to some sort of expository order is a stupendous one, and Mr. Seligman's achievement is correspondingly great. Many years of dedicated labor—surely not less than fifteen—must have gone into the preparation of this book. The sheer mass of material which Mr. Seligman has managed to assimilate, including as it does virtually all the published work of all the important economists of the last three generations together with everything of importance that has been written about them—none of it easy reading—is simply prodigious. The footnote references alone occupy seventy-nine double-column pages. But the result well justifies the effort. Through it all Mr. Seligman has managed to maintain his critical equipoise, to be fair even to those he most dislikes, and above all to understand, whether he agrees or not.

Clearly, three generations of scholars—European, British, and American—cannot and do not fall neatly into any pattern. The pattern that Mr. Seligman has imposed on them is a useful one, and one that makes sense, whether or not we agree with the judgments implicit in his arrangement of the material. Undoubtedly, many of his pro-

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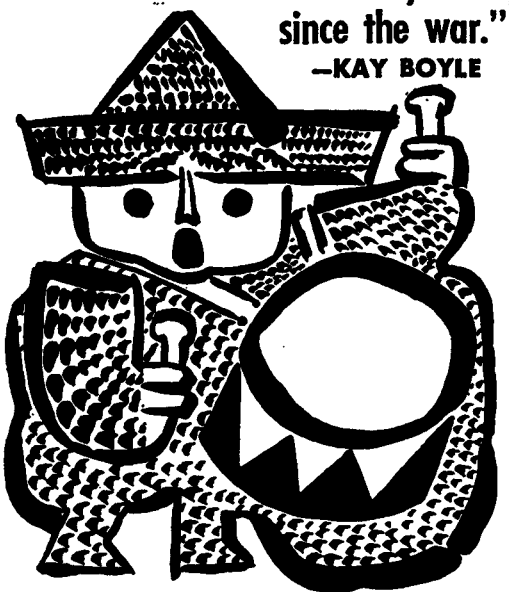

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fessional readers will demur at his having put the dissenting foot of modern economics forward. Others may protest at the subordinate position assigned to J. M. Keynes, who occupies only the fourth of six sections of the final chapter, entitled "From Reason to Technique." This subordinate position is quite at variance with the importance Mr. Seligman himself attributes to Keynes, whom he compares in terms of influence with Adam Smith and Karl Marx. A further demurrer might be entered—particularly on behalf of the non-professional reader—about the inadequacy of his explanations of the titles. To the professional reader, Mr. Seligman's titles and his arrangement of them and of the contents of the book tell a story by themselves. But what is "The Thrust toward Technique" going to mean to the lay reader, especially when he turns to the first page of this part and finds that it begins with "The Swedish Contribution"?

This sense of deprivation is heightened by the "Concluding Remarks." Here, Mr. Seligman explicitly reveals a shrewdness and degree of balanced judgment that throughout the book had remained implicit in its organization. No doubt he had withheld some of the richness of his direct comment out of deference to his major objective, that of a sympathetic exposition of the views and findings of a great number of different men. In that objective he has succeeded brilliantly. But the historian is not a camera or a tape recorder; properly and inevitably he is an interpreter. Therefore, even at the cost of enlarging what is already a very large book, we would have appreciated having more.

NEWS AND HISTORY

HERE TO STAY: STUDIES IN HUMAN TENACITY. By JOHN HERSEY. *Knopf. 336 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by RENATA ADLER

WHEN, in his introduction, John Hersey calls this a collection of "journalistic pieces," he is claiming both too little and too much. The stories—three of which were originally published in *Life*, four in the *New Yorker*—are curious mixtures of historical fact, editorial comment, and imaginative recreation of events, in which the author appears simultaneously as a reporter, an essayist, and a writer of fiction. As a result, the articles (ranging in subject matter from the escape of an elderly lady during the flood at Winsted to the survival of a few Japanese after the attack on Hiroshima have in common, not a theme ("Human Tenacity"), but a form. They are examples of that subjective, sentimental class of fiction-essay journalism: the Human Interest Story. Despite the author's attempts to make them essays in celebration of human courage, the articles present only a rather tabloid spectacle of human suffering.

Mr. Hersey claims to have posed himself the existential question: what keeps man in adversity alive? His book begins with the statement: "The great themes are love and death; their synthesis is the will to live, and that is what this book is about"—which

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perfectly illustrates the kind of folksy, meaningless rhetoric that characterizes almost the entire book. In drawing a universal conclusion from his stories, the author seems almost invariably to miss his own point. "Drink deeply therefore, dear reader," Mr. Hersey writes (in an exhortation characteristic of his prose) "of the adrenal wine." But he consistently fails to find in his characters either any operation of adrenalin or any sign of that nobility which often inspires man's determination to live or to die. Most of these "heroes" simply, meekly, decline to expire—with the aid, perhaps, of sympathizers, or through the inefficiency of persecutors, or by some Providential oversight. None is conceded such motives as love, idealism, or a sense of human worth and dignity. Typical of Hersey's survivors are the Feketes, Hungarian refugees who, admitting they were not freedom fighters ("This had been a young people's fight"), risked their lives merely because the grass appeared greener on the other, Western, side of the Austrian border.

The problem of Mr. Hersey's material is complicated by his difficulties of tone and style. His dialogue, for instance, consists largely in making each new sentence contain unintegrated fragments of the last; thus all his male characters speak what is a kind of *Dragnet* Hemingway:

> Shots. I got enough shots in me since I come in the army. I got everything. I got typhoid, yellow fever, I don't know what all I got. . . .

His ladies, on the other hand, can be heard to exclaim amid the ruins: "Oh dear! Aren't people a puzzle?" and "Gracious, it *is* teeming out tonight, isn't it, Yvonne?" When a one-armed soldier and his girl are reunited for the first time, they say:

> Our first meeting wasn't too personal together, Joey.
> It couldn't be. Didn't you see all those people?
> I'm so excited, I been biting my fingernail right off.

Incongruity of subject and sensibility occasionally verges upon the ludicrous: persecution of the Jews, for example, is referred to as "time honored"; a cripple who was carried back into Hiroshima shortly

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after the blast "noticed," in Mr. Hersey's words, "something in particular which gave her the creeps"; a woman whose breast was sheared off and a man whose face was burned beyond recognition are described as "unpleasant companions"; the situation of Hiroshima's wounded is identified as "cumulative distress." "Best of all," the author actually writes at one point, "the nurses and attendants started to carry away the corpses." These examples do not reflect irony or understatement, but a grotesque failure of the imagination.

The failure is most obvious, not in "Hiroshima" (who *can* imagine it adequately?), but in "Tattoo Number 107,907," a story in which a concentration camp is made to sound like a particularly arduous boarding school. The authorities, "bristling and snarling in the most astonishing manner," cannot prevent the hero from endearing himself to all, and finally, from making good. The author observes regretfully that 107,907 achieved the familiar *Du* with only one of the Nazi warders, but later ". . . he began to widen his circle . . . he became a person of importance in the barracks. . . . Best of all [that phrase again], his boss undertook to tell him the daily news." Mr. Hersey uses the words "fun" and "adjust" in connection with his Jewish inmates of the Nazi concentration camp, and he relates that when the smell from the crematoria became overpowering, 107,907 "made a business of going around among the German civilians holding his nose." "Boys," says the warder, in a passage which establishes the tone of the piece, "We're going to give you an examination in welding. Do your best, because this is a big chance for you." 107,907 does his best, and becomes successful and popular. One must, with some bewilderment, remind oneself that the camp in question is Auschwitz.

MR. HERSEY'S deficiencies of style and imagination are less apparent in any single piece than in the book as a whole. Each of these stories had, after all, at the time of its original publication, a certain timely journalistic interest. People wanted to know the facts about a recent event, and Hersey was proficient at getting the facts. But even good journalism has its inflections. At any given moment, one event may be as newsworthy as another, but for news to survive as history, the reporter must display a certain responsiveness to magnitude; as history's recording instrument, he must be able to register both triviality and enormity and to distinguish between them. Well meaning and sympathetic as he is, Mr. Hersey's sensibility is not equal to this. He lavishes about as much attention upon the Winsted lady's amputated little toe as he devotes to the sufferings of humanity in the atomic holocaust. A case can be made, of course, for the idea that individual suffering shares in the

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significance of collective tragedy, but Hersey fails to heighten his accounts of personal misfortune to a universal point. His tale of an elderly lady in a New England flood is, after all, trivial; and his stories of maimed veterans, oppressed minorities, and annihilated cities become, through their uniform tone and their indiscriminate combination, unremittingly trivial also. In the end, all that Mr. Hersey's historical seismograph has registered for us is that events, sad to a slightly varying degree, have happened to people everywhere. "Gracious," one can imagine his elderly heroine saying if the bomb had dropped on Winsted, "it *is* burning out tonight, isn't it, Yvonne?"

SOME RECENT JEWISH BOOKS

MERIDIAN-JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY PAPERBACKS

Some of these were first published sixty or seventy years ago, and some only a few years ago. Their republication in this form makes it possible for private and especially institutional libraries to acquire many excellent books that would otherwise be expensive and hard to come by.

Among them are several modern classics, superseded only in minor points of detail by more recent work. In particular, four are so established and authoritative that I list them without comment.

Jewish Life in the Middle Ages, by Israel Abrahams (452 pp., $1.55).

A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy, by Isaac Husik (466 pp., $2.25).

The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue, by James Parkes (430 pp., $1.95).

The Jew in the Literature of England, by Montagu Frank Modder (435 pp., $1.65).

Selected Essays of Ahad Ha-'am, translated from the Hebrew, edited, and with an introduction by Leon Simon (347 pp., $1.75).

Ahad Ha-'am has lost—rightly, I think—influence because of his evasiveness about religion. But he is still relevant, and the best representative of a whole class of

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Jewish thinkers and writers who tried to come to terms with modernity.

Most of the essays in this book, now sixty and seventy years old, are still worth reading—e.g., "Sacred and Profane," "Priest and Prophet," and "Slavery in Freedom."

Judaism and Christianity: Essays by Leo Baeck. Translated and introduced by Walter Kaufmann (292 pp., $1.55).

If Baeck's *Essence of Judaism* may be regarded as a defense against Christian polemic, these essays are a (the?) Jewish theological attack. They are a monument to the last towering figure of German Jewry.

For the Sake of Heaven, by Martin Buber (316 pp., $1.55).

A parable about good and evil, and the temptation and danger of Hastening the End.

Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism, by Simon Dubnow. Edited with an introductory essay by Koppel S. Pinson (385 pp., $1.75).

Writings by the great historian, philosopher of Jewish history, and autonomist. The late Professor Pinson's biographical and analytical introduction is everything such an essay should be.

Students, Scholars, and Saints, by Louis Ginzberg (291 pp., $1.45).

For some reason, this book is not nearly so widely known as it deserves. Whether on the religion of the Pharisees or of 19th-century Lithuanian talmudists, there is the matter here to dispel entrenched fallacies. Ginzberg was very conscious (and proud) of his descent from R. Elijah Gaon of Vilna, and he was above suspicion of sympathy for Hasidism or, more generally, religious emotionalism. That makes his insistence on the inward and saintly piety of his scholars—most notably the Gaon himself—all the more instructive.

Judaism and Modern Man, by Will Herberg (313 pp., $1.55).

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has smothered him in silence. For the professional scholars, he is an autodidact outsider. For the "God idea" thinkers and the orthoprax his uncompromising theism is offensive and—though it is hard to believe that serious people have said this—un-Jewish. Apparently it is un-Jewish to be influenced by a Christian like Reinhold Niebuhr but thoroughly Jewish to be influenced by a gentile philosophical naturalist like Dewey.

The Zionist Idea, edited and with an introduction by Arthur Hertzberg (638 pp., $2.25).

First-rate intellectual and social history.

The Jew in the Medieval World, by Jacob R. Marcus (504 pp., $1.95).

The subtitle is *A Source Book.* Contemporary documentation, Jewish and gentile, on the Jewish community both internally and in its relations with church and state.

A History of the Jewish People, by Max L. Margolis and Alexander Marx (752 pp., $2.45).

The best one-volume Jewish history in any language, for reference, study, or reading. By two of the greatest Jewish scholars of this country and this century.

Prince of the Ghetto, by Maurice Samuel (294 pp., $1.55).

This book, about the Yiddish writer Isaac Leyb Peretz, his people, and his work, is as good as the author's *World of Sholem Aleichem,* and that is very good indeed.

Studies in Judaism, by Solomon Schechter (372 pp., $1.65).

A selection from the first two series, not the third. It includes "The Dogmas of Judaism," with its famous conclusion: "We usually urge that in Judaism religion means life; but we forget that a life without guiding principles and thoughts is a life not worth living . . . the Judaism of a great part of our modern theologians reminds one very much of the words with which the author of *Marius the Epicurean* characterises the Roman religion in the days of her decline: a religion which had been always something to be done rather than something to be thought, or believed, or loved. . . . It is only for God's sake . . . that religion becomes worth living and dying for."

Hebrew Reborn, by Shalom Spiegel (482 pp., $1.95).

More than thirty years since it was first published, this youthful work is still astonishingly good. In form it is an account of the creation of modern Hebrew literature, but what it really does is to tell the adventures of the Jews with modernity in the past two centuries.

Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, by Herman L. Strack (362 pp., $1.55).

The standard reference work, by a German Protestant scholar and anti-anti-Semite.

The Devil and the Jews, by Joshua Trachtenberg (278 pp., $1.45).

A scholarly documentation of the medieval Christian perception of the Jew.

Three Jewish Philosophers: Philo, Selections, edited by Hans Lewy; Saadya Gaon, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs,* edited by Alexander Altmann; Jehuda Halevi, *Kuzari,* edited by Isaak Heinemann (450 pp., $1.75).

—MILTON HIMMELFARB

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

STEVEN MARCUS last appeared in these pages in our July 1962 number with his article, "Who is Fagin?"

MARVIN FOX, who teaches philosophy at Ohio State University, is a frequent reviewer.

RENATA ADLER is a member of the staff of the *New Yorker.* This is her first appearance in COMMENTARY.

C. E. AYRES, who also appears for the first time, teaches economics at the University of Texas.

MILTON HIMMELFARB is a contributing editor.

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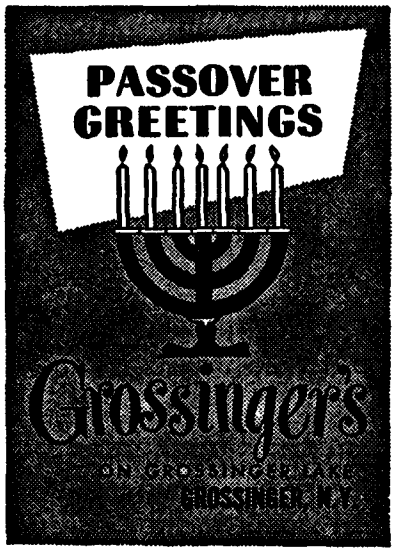

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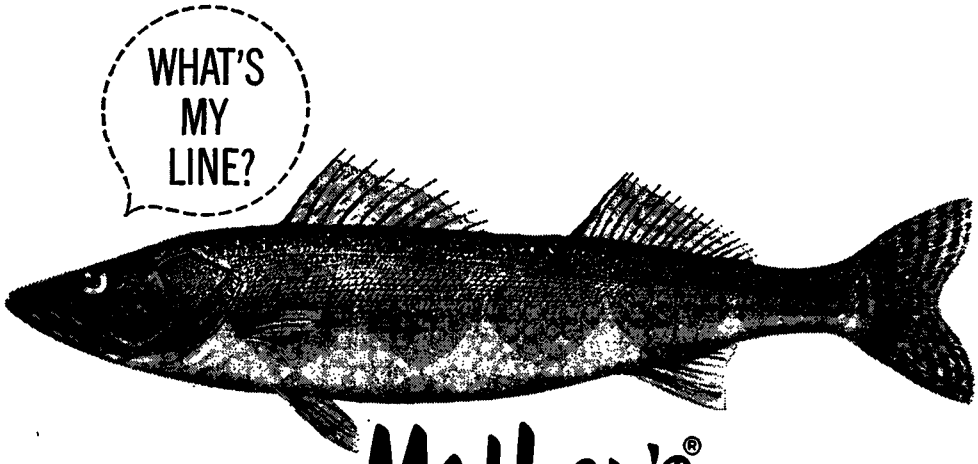

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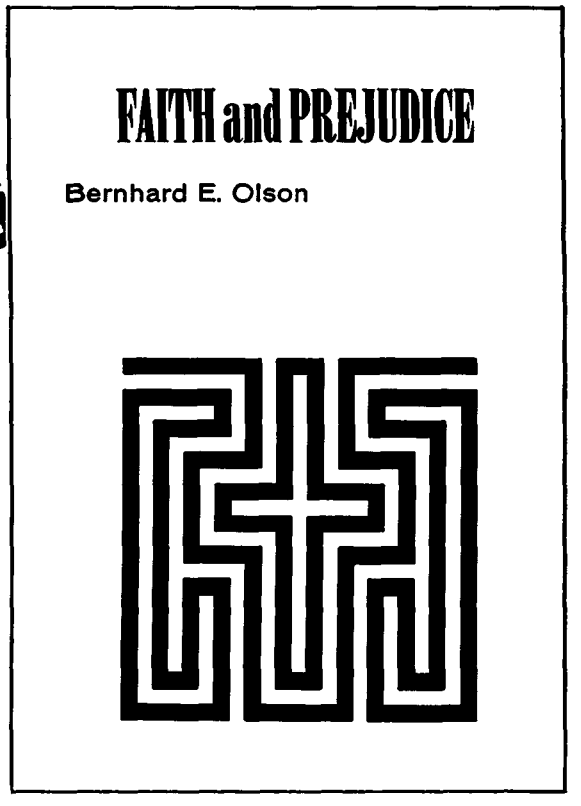

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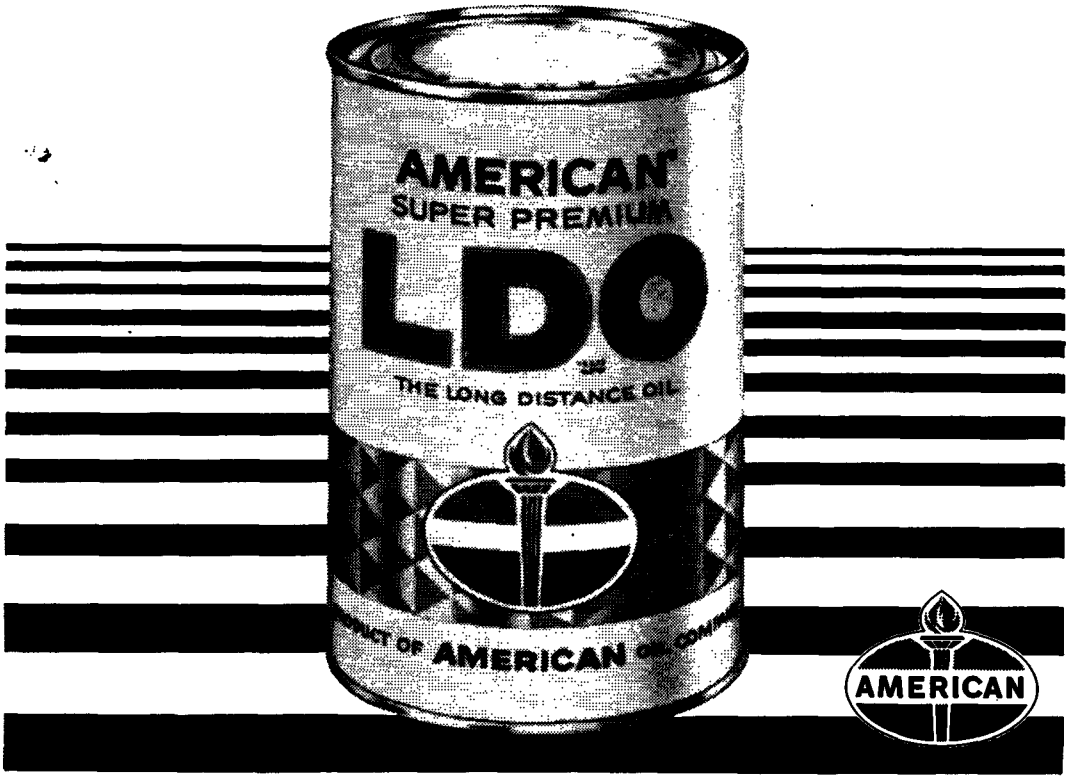

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